

Shellfish Pollution Reduction Programme

As required by Article 5 of the Shellfish Water Directive 2006/113/EC and
Section 6 of the Quality of Shellfish Waters Regulations, 2006 (S.I. No. 268 of 2006)

Characterisation Report Number 6

**WEST SHANNON POULNASHERRY BAY
SHELLFISH AREA
COUNTY CLARE**

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------------|---|
| AA | Appropriate Assessment |
| BOD | Biochemical Oxygen Demand |
| CFB | Central Fisheries Board |
| CSO | Combined Sewer Overflow |
| DED | District Electoral Division |
| DEHLG | Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government |
| DO | Dissolved Oxygen |
| EPA | Environmental Protection Agency |
| EU | European Union |
| Ha | Hectare |
| IPPC | Integrated Pollution Prevention Control |
| Kg | Kilogram |
| LU | Livestock Units |
| NACE | European industrial activity classification |
| MI | Marine Institute |
| NPWS | National Parks and Wildlife Service |
| OSWWTs | On-Site Waste Water Treatment System |
| P.E. | Population Equivalent |
| PRP | Pollution Reduction Programme |
| RBD | River Basin District |
| RBMP | River Basin Management Plan |
| SAC | Special Area of Conservation |
| SEA | Strategic Environmental Assessment |
| SFPA | Sea Fisheries Protection Authority |
| SPA | Special Protection Area |
| SWMC | Shellfish Waters Management Committee |
| TCE | Tetrachloroethylene |
| WFD | Water Framework Directive |
| WSIP | Water Services Investment Programme |
| WTP | Water Treatment Plant |
| WWTP | Waste Water Treatment Plant |

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Article 5 of the Shellfish Directive (2006/113/EC) and section 6 of the Quality of Shellfish Waters Regulations (S.I. No. 268 of 2006) require the development of Pollution Reduction Programmes (PRPs) for designated shellfish areas in order to support shellfish life and growth and to contribute to the high quality of directly edible shellfish products. Shellfish PRPs relate to bivalve and gastropod molluscs, including oysters, mussels, cockles, scallops and clams. They do not cover shellfish crustaceans such as crabs, crayfish and lobsters.

1.1 Aims and responsibility

The objectives of Shellfish PRPs are to:

- Protect or improve water quality in designated shellfish areas;
- Achieve compliance with water quality parameter values outlined in Annex I of the Shellfish Waters Directive (2006/113/EC) and Schedules 2 and 4 of the Quality of Shellfish Waters Regulations (S.I. No. 268 of 2006);
- Determine the factors responsible for any non-compliances with the water quality parameter values; and
- Ensure that implementation of the Shellfish PRPs does not lead, directly, or indirectly, to increased pollution of coastal and brackish waters.

Under the Regulations, the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources is responsible for the development of Shellfish PRPs. However, this responsibility was transferred to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) on 5th November 2008. An Inter-Departmental /Inter Agency Shellfish Waters Management Committee (SWMC) supports the Department in the development of the Shellfish PRPs.

The Regulations also place an obligation on every public authority to perform its functions in a manner that promotes compliance with the Directive and the Regulations, and to take such actions as are necessary to secure compliance with the Directive and the Regulations and with the Shellfish PRPs.

1.2 Shellfish water quality parameters

Compliance with the directive is measured against achievement of shellfish water quality parameter values outlined in Annex I of the Shellfish Waters Directive (2006/113/EC) and Schedules 2 and 4 of the Quality of Shellfish Waters Regulations (S.I. No. 268 of 2006). Table 1 summarizes these values. Mandatory (I) values must be fully achieved while it must be endeavoured to achieve guideline values (G).

TABLE 1 - Parameters listed in Annex I of the Shellfish Water Directive

| Physical | Guideline Values (G) | Mandatory Values (I) |
|------------------|---|---|
| pH (pH units) | | 7 – 9 pH units |
| Temperature (°C) | A discharge affecting shellfish waters must not cause the | No mandatory value set in the Directive |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| | temperature of the waters to exceed by more than 2°C the temperature of waters not so affected | |
| Colouration (after filtration) (mg Pt/l) | | A discharge affecting shellfish waters must not cause the colour of the waters after filtration to deviate by more than 10 mg Pt/l from the colour of unaffected waters |
| Suspended Solids (mg/l) | | A discharge affecting shellfish waters must not cause the suspended solid content of the waters to exceed the content in unaffected waters by more than 30% |
| Salinity (%) | 12 to 38% | ≤ 40% A discharge affecting shellfish waters must not cause their salinity to exceed the salinity of unaffected waters by more than 10% |
| Chemical | Guideline Value (G) | Mandatory Value (I) |
| Dissolved oxygen (Saturation %) | ≥ 80% | ≥ 70% Should an individual measurement indicate a value lower than 70%, measurements shall be repeated An individual measurement may only indicate a value of less than 60% if there are no harmful consequences for the development of shellfish colonies |
| Petroleum hydrocarbons | | Hydrocarbons must not be present in the shellfish water in such quantities as to: - produce a visible film on the surface of the water and/or a deposit on the shellfish - have harmful effects on the shellfish |
| Organohalogenated substances | The concentration of each substance in shellfish flesh must be so limited that it contributes in accordance with Article 1 (of the Directive), to the high quality of shellfish products | The concentration of each substance in the shellfish water or in shellfish flesh must not reach or exceed a level which has harmful effects on the shellfish larvae |
| Metals (Ag, As, Cd, Cr, Cu, Hg, Ni, Pb and Zn) (mg/L) | The concentration of each substance in shellfish flesh must be so limited that it contributes in accordance with Article 1 (of the Directive), to the high quality of shellfish products | The concentration of each substance in the shellfish water or in the shellfish flesh must not exceed a level which gives rise to harmful effects on the shellfish and their larvae The synergic effects of these metals must be taken into consideration |
| Others | Guideline Value (G) | Mandatory Value (I) |
| Faecal coliforms (per 100 mL) | ≤ 300 per 100 mL in the shellfish flesh and intervalvular liquid | No mandatory value set in the Directive |

| | | |
|---|----------------|--|
| Substances affecting the taste of shellfish | | Concentration lower than liable to impair the taste of the shellfish |
| Saxitoxin (produced by dinoflagellates) | No limit given | No limit given |

1.3 Designated shellfish areas

Fourteen shellfish areas were originally designated in 1994 under the Quality of Shellfish Waters Regulations (S.I. No. 200 of 1994, revoked by S.I. No. 268 of 2006). A further 49 areas were subsequently designated in 2009 under the European Communities (Quality of Shellfish Waters) (Amendment) Regulations, 2009 (S.I. No. 55 of 2009). All 63 designated sites are illustrated in Figure 1 below.



Note: Map numbers I to XIV refer to waters originally designated under the European Communities (Quality of Shellfish Waters) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 200 of 1994), while map numbers 1 to 45 refer to waters designated under the European Communities (Quality of Shellfish Waters) (Amendment) Regulations 2009 (S.I. 55 of 2009). The referenced maps can be found in the relevant regulatory documents.

FIGURE 1 - 63 designated shellfish areas

1.4 Development of the Shellfish Pollution Reduction Programmes

The Directive and Regulations require that any non-compliances with the shellfish water quality parameter values are identified. The Directive and Regulations further require that the factors responsible for such non-compliances are identified.

Information on impacts and pressures has therefore been collated in an individual characterisation report for each shellfish site from available inventories. The likelihood of the pressures to impact on shellfish water quality parameter values in the shellfish areas has been estimated.

Individual site Pollution Reduction Programmes (PRPs) and a supporting toolkit of measures outline the measures which can be used to control pressures where necessary to protect and improve water quality in a specific shellfish area.

The 2009 Shellfish PRPs (including the supporting characterisation reports and toolkit of measures) represent an initial phase of Shellfish PRP development, drawing on available information sources. Their development has been a desk-based exercise and they provide a good indication of the main pressures likely to be impacting on shellfish water quality and the measures that can be used to control those pressures. Ongoing assessment and monitoring of shellfish waters will be used to confirm the effectiveness of these programmes and to refine the programmes where necessary. As the shellfish monitoring database grows, and as programmes are implemented, incremental changes will be made to ensure compliance with the standards and objectives established.

PRPs produced during 2009 supersede Action Programmes which were developed in 2006 for the 14 original shellfish areas.

1.5 Assessment of Shellfish Pollution Reduction Programmes

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Shellfish PRPs and supporting toolkit of measures has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC). SEA is a process for evaluating, at the earliest appropriate stage, all of the possible environmental effects of plans or programmes before they are adopted while giving the public and other interested parties an opportunity to comment and to be kept informed of decisions and how they were made. The assessment of the PRPs resulted in mitigation of some of the measures contained in the PRPs and toolkit of measures that were identified as likely to lead to adverse effects on other aspects of the environment. The reports associated with the SEA process can be downloaded from www.environ.ie.

An ‘Appropriate Assessment’ of the Shellfish PRPs has been carried out in parallel with the SEA assessment in accordance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). Appropriate Assessment is a process for evaluating the implications of plans or programmes for sites which have been designated for the protection and conservation of habitats and species of European importance. The reports associated with the Appropriate Assessment can be downloaded from www.environ.ie.

1.6 Links with the River Basin Management Plans

The EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) provides a framework for the protection and restoration of the aquatic environment and terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands directly depending on the aquatic environment. In accordance with the requirements of the directive, River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) were published in draft form in December 2008 with the final RBMPs published in December 2009. They are the primary plans in place in relation to the water environment for the foreseeable future.

Article 13(5) of the WFD states that ‘river basin management plans may be supplemented by the production of more detailed programmes and management plans for sub-basin, sector, issue, or water type, to deal with particular aspects of water management’. Shellfish PRPs are an example of such programmes. In addition, Article 13(4) and Annex VII of the WFD requires that RBMPs include ‘a register of any more detailed programmes and management plans for the River Basin District dealing with particular sub-basins, sectors, issues or water types, together with a summary of their contents’. The Shellfish PRPs are included in the registers of each of the River Basin Districts.

Articles 4 (1)(c) and 4 (2) of the WFD specify that, in relation to protected areas, where more than one of set of objectives relate to a given body of water, the most stringent shall apply. Designated shellfish areas are included in the WFD register of protected areas provided for in Articles 6 and 7 of the directive.

The WFD strengthens and consolidates a number of existing environmental directives while repealing others on a phased basis. The Shellfish Directive is due to be repealed by the WFD in 2013. Shellfish PRPs are therefore closely aligned with the RBMPs.

1.7 Layout of the Shellfish Pollution Reduction Programmes

Characterisation Report

- **Section 1**
Section 1 is an introductory section which puts the Characterisation Reports in context and outlines their contents.
- **Section 2**
Section 2 describes the general characteristics of the designated shellfish areas as well as their contributing catchments.
- **Section 3**
Section 3 describes water quality in the designated shellfish areas.
- **Section 4**
Section 4 consists of a series of maps illustrating the general characteristics of the shellfish areas and catchments, as well as the marine and land-based pressures in the catchments.

- **Section 5**

Section 5 provides a series of tables summarising the marine and land-based pressures in the catchments. The likelihood of the pressures to impact on shellfish water quality parameters is discussed. A summary is also provided highlighting the key pressures and potential secondary pressures which are most likely to be impacting on shellfish water quality parameters. The discussions in this section draw on available information including information generated during the WFD implementation process and geographical features of significance. The differing nature of the pressures are also taken into account as pressures vary substantially in terms of how severely they are likely to impact on shellfish water quality parameters.

Pollution Reduction Programmes

- The Pollution Reduction Programmes summarise the specific measures for controlling the key and potential secondary pressures, identified in this characterisation report, which are most likely to be impacting on shellfish water quality in West Shannon Poulnasherry Bay shellfish area. This can be downloaded from www.environ.ie.

Toolkit of Measures

- The supporting toolkit of measures outlines all of the measures available for controlling all of the pressures which can impact on shellfish water quality. Due to the close alignments between the Shellfish PRPs and the RBMPs, the toolkit is drawn from the programme of measures contained within the RBMPs. This strengthens the integration of shellfish management and wider water quality management policy in Ireland. The toolkit can be downloaded from www.environ.ie.

2.0 GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Name | West Shannon Poulnasherry Bay Shellfish Area |
| Map number | 6 |
| Year of designation | 2009 |
| Area | 7.1 km ² |
| River Basin District | Shannon IRBD |
| County | Clare |
| Location of sampling point | 52 deg 39.203 min North (Lat) 9 deg 33.550 min West (Long) |
| Catchment area | 109.11 km ² |
| Adjacent PRPs | West Shannon Rinevella, West Shannon Carrigaholt, West Shannon Ballylongford |

West Shannon Poulnasherry is situated in County Clare in the Shannon International River Basin District (Map 1). It is situated on the northern shores of the Shannon Estuary, at Loop Head. The designated shellfish area is 7.1 km² in area and it extends from Querin point to Baunahard point, taking in the entirety of Poulnasherry Bay. Three other designated shellfish areas are situated in adjacent tidal waters, West Shannon Rinevella, West Shannon Carrigaholt and West Shannon Ballylongford.

The contributing catchment is 109.11 km² in area (Map 3) and does not contain any significant river systems. Kilrush is the largest urban centre in the area with a population of 2,657. The land is low lying and agriculture is widespread with over 70% of the land area being farmed. Livestock grazing on pasture land is the most widespread type of farming.

Due to its location within Shannon Estuary, this shellfish area is situated downstream of the entire Shannon district. The Shannon district is more than 18,000 km² in area and drains an extensive area of central Ireland. More than 670,000 people live in the district, many in small villages and on-off houses in rural areas. The largest urban area is Limerick city and there are several other large towns. Agriculture is widespread throughout the district, over 70% of the land area is agricultural, with livestock grazing on pasture land the most common type of farming activity. There are also significant areas of forestry and worked peatland. Activity in the estuary itself includes commercial port activities at Kilrush and Shannon Foynes, fishing activity at Carrigaholt and a ferry service between Killimer and Tarbert.

2.1 Protected areas

The designated shellfish area lies within West Shannon Poulnasherry candidate SAC (Map 11).

Other SACs which intersect the shellfish area's catchment include the Lower River Shannon and Tullaher Lough and Bog. SPAs include the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuary.

2.2 Shellfish growing activity

Table 2 summarises the number and area of shellfish licensed areas within the designated shellfish area. Oyster cultivation is predominant in the area (Map 2).

The bulk of Shellfish production in the western Shannon estuary comprises bag and trestle cultured Pacific oysters. Poulnasherry Bay is a major producer of oysters.

TABLE 2 - Shellfish licensed areas

| Shellfish types | Number | Area | % Area |
|-----------------|--------|---------------------|--------|
| Abalone | 0 | 0 | 0 % |
| Clams | 0 | 0 | 0 % |
| Cockles | 0 | 0 | 0 % |
| Lobsters | 0 | 0 | 0 % |
| Scallops | 0 | 0 | 0 % |
| Mussels | 0 | 0 | 0 % |
| Oysters | 44 | 1.7 km ² | 24 % |
| Sea Urchins | 0 | 0 | 0 % |
| Periwinkles | 0 | 0 | 0 % |
| Seaweed | 0 | 0 | 0 % |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 0 % |

3.0 WATER QUALITY IN THE SHELLFISH AREA

Dedicated shellfish monitoring data has been collated and compared with shellfish water quality parameter mandatory and guideline values outlined in Annex I of the Shellfish Waters Directive (2006/113/EC) and Schedule 2 and 4 of the Quality of Shellfish Waters Regulations (S.I. No. 268 of 2006) (Table 1).

Additional monitoring data from other monitoring programmes has also been collated in order to highlight any water quality issues in the vicinity of the shellfish areas. This can aid in the identification of the pressures most likely to impact on the shellfish areas and thereby in the identification of any measures to be applied. Datasets were collated from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Marine Institute (MI) and the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA). Where applicable these additional monitoring data were compared with the shellfish water quality parameter mandatory and guideline values outlined in Annex I of the Shellfish Waters Directive (2006/113/EC) and Schedules 2 and 4 of the Quality of Shellfish Waters Regulations (S.I. No. 268 of 2006) (Table 1).

Marine Institute Shellfish Monitoring Programme

The MI carries out shellfish monitoring at designated shellfish areas. This dedicated shellfish monitoring programme involves analysing for general components, metals and organics in both water and biota samples. The results have been compared with the shellfish mandatory and guideline values outlined in Table 1.

For this designated area there are no water or biota samples available.

Faecal coliform biota results were also available from the MI from November 2008, February 2009, May 2009 and August 2009. Though the shellfish guideline value for faecal coliforms in biota outlined in Table 1 was breached in the November 2008 sample, this shellfish area is compliant.

EPA Marine Monitoring Programme

The EPA Marine Monitoring Programme monitors for general components in water at a large number of marine sites around Ireland.

There was no data available from this programme for the designated shellfish area.

WFD Monitoring Programme

WFD status classifications from the WFD monitoring programme were used as indicators of compliance with shellfish water quality parameter values. WFD status classifications are based on a variety of parameters including biological, physico-chemical, chemical and hydromorphological elements. The monitoring information on which the marine status classifications are based was collected by the EPA, the Marine Institute, the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and the Central Fisheries Board between 2005 and 2008.

The WFD status of the coastal water body, within which the shellfish area is situated, is 'high' and therefore satisfactory. However, some of the streams discharging in the vicinity of the shellfish area are at 'poor' status due to the results of physico-chemical and invertebrate sampling. (Map 12).

Shellfish Flesh Monitoring Programme

Shellfish flesh classifications (carried out under the European Communities (Live Bivalve Molluscs) (Health Conditions for Production and Placing on the Market) Regulations, 1996 (S.I. No. 147 of 1996)) were also used as indicators of faecal contamination in shellfish. Sampling is carried out by the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) on at least a monthly basis

The licensed areas within the designated areas are classified as Class A meaning that live bivalve molluscs may be collected for direct human consumption and meet the health standards for live bivalve molluscs laid down in the EC Regulation on food safety (Regulation (EC) No 853/2004). However, in certain areas within the designated area this is a seasonal classification and it reverts to Classification B from the 2nd of June to the 31st of December, meaning that shellfish may be placed on the market for human consumption only after treatment in a purification centre or after relaying so as to meet the health standards.

Overall Water Quality

The dedicated shellfish samples available for this shellfish area were found to be compliant with shellfish guideline values for faecal coliforms in biota outlined in Annex I of the Shellfish Waters Directive (2006/113/EC) and Schedule 4 of the Quality of Shellfish Waters Regulations (S.I. No. 268 of 2006) (Table 1). Ongoing shellfish monitoring will strengthen the assessment of compliance status at this shellfish area.

The results of the WFD monitoring programme do not indicate any water quality issues within the area. However, there are some issues (physico-chemical) in the waters discharging in the vicinity of this shellfish area.

The shellfish flesh classification indicates low levels of faecal contamination in the shellfish area. However, the shellfish area is compliant with the guideline value for faecal coliforms as stated above.

4.0 CHARACTERISATION MAPS

The following series of maps illustrate the general characteristics of the designated shellfish area and its contributing catchment, as well as the marine and land-based pressures that could potentially impact on the shellfish area. The pressures are further divided into point source pressures, diffuse source pressures and morphological pressures.

Some of the point source pressures are symbolised according to whether they are ‘at risk’ or ‘not at risk’. These risk designations were developed during the WFD implementation process. Some of the designations date back to the Article V characterisation process in 2004 and 2005 but many of the risk designations were updated in 2008 to feed into the draft RBMPs. The risk designations are based on a variety of information, for example, waste water treatment plants can be designated as ‘at risk’ because they are serving a larger population than they were designed to cater for or because their discharges are impacting on water quality. Section 5 of this characterisation report provides the detail behind the risk designations for each of the pressures and discusses their likelihood to be impacting on shellfish water quality parameters.

Whilst the risk designations under the WFD provide a useful screening tool for pressures, their relevance in terms of any water quality issues measured in Shellfish Waters has been assessed in further detail to identify key pressures at a particular site. For example the WFD risk may be based on particular impacts to freshwater ecology which are not pertinent to the shellfish water status.

TABLE 3 - List of maps

| Map No. | Map Title | Details |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| General Characteristics Maps | | |
| MAP 1 | Designated shellfish area | Designated shellfish area with summary statistics. |
| MAP 2 | Licensed shellfish areas | Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food register of licensed shellfish areas within the designated shellfish area. |
| MAP 3 | Contributing catchment | Nested river water bodies and inter-coastal freshwater bodies discharging in the vicinity of the designated shellfish area. |
| MAP 4 | Topography | Topography of the contributing catchment. |
| MAP 5 | Soil wetness | Soil wetness which indicates drainage characteristics |
| MAP 6 | Vulnerability of groundwaters to pathogens from subsoil discharges | Potential risk of pathogens from sub-soils discharges reaching groundwaters. Based on vulnerability, presence of alluvium, mineral content of soils, wetness, aquifer type, subsoil depth and subsoil permeability. |

| Map No. | Map Title | Details |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| MAP 7 | Vulnerability of groundwaters to phosphorus from subsoil discharges | Potential risk of phosphorus from sub-soils discharges reaching groundwaters. Based on vulnerability, presence of alluvium, mineral content of soils, wetness, aquifer type, subsoil depth and subsoil permeability. |
| MAP 8 | Vulnerability of surface waters to pathogens from subsoil discharges | Potential risk of pathogens from sub-soils discharges reaching surface waters. Based on vulnerability, presence of alluvium, mineral content of soils, wetness, aquifer type, subsoil depth and subsoil permeability. |
| MAP 9 | Vulnerability of surface waters to phosphorus from subsoil discharges | Potential risk of phosphorus from sub-soils discharges reaching surface waters. Based on vulnerability, presence of alluvium, mineral content of soils, wetness, aquifer type, subsoil depth and subsoil permeability. |
| MAP 10 | Likelihood of inadequate percolation in subsoils | Likelihood of inadequate percolation in subsoils. Based on aquifer type, vulnerability and subsoil permeability. |
| MAP 11 | Designated protected areas | SACs, SPAs, freshwater pearl mussel areas, recreational waters, drinking waters, nutrient sensitive areas, water dependant habitats and RAMSAR sites within the contributing catchment. |
| MAP 12 | WFD surface water status | River, lake, transitional and coastal water body status resulting from the WFD monitoring programme. |
| MAP 13 | EPA diffuse risk assessment | Water body based risk to waters from diffuse sources. Based on the percentages of diffuse land cover per water body including peatlands, coniferous forestry, agriculture and urban areas. |
| Marine Pressures Maps | | |
| Point Source Pressures | | |
| MAP 14 | Marine finfish farms | Marine finfish farms in the vicinity of the designated shellfish area. Taken from the Marine Atlas. |
| Morphology Pressures | | |
| MAP 15 | Fishing gear activity | Fishing gear activity in the vicinity of the designated shellfish area. Taken from the Marine Atlas. |
| MAP 16 | Structures | Marine morphology structures such as bridges and causeways |

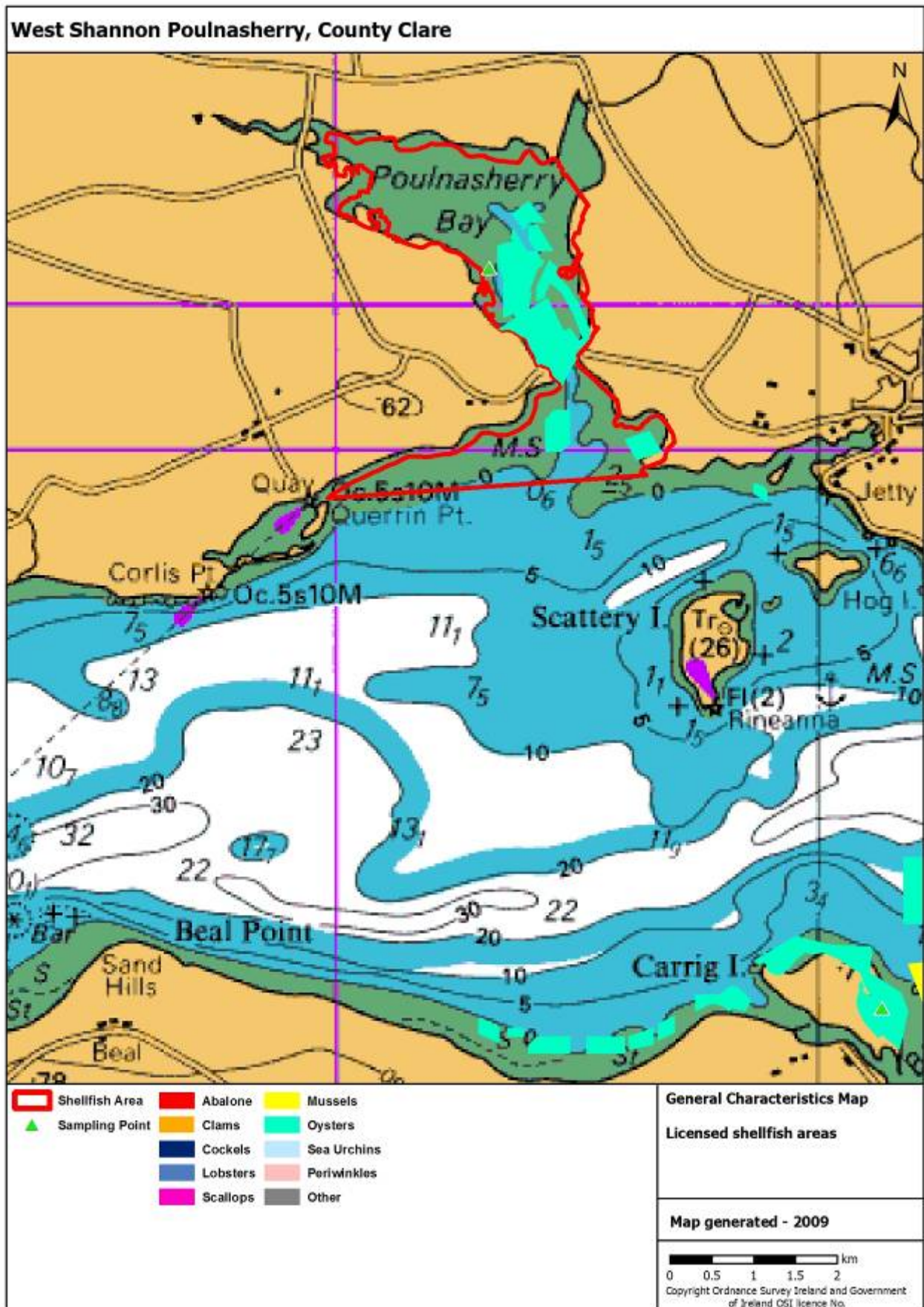
| Map No. | Map Title | Details |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| MAP 17 | Physical modifications | Physical modifications such as shoreline reinforcement, embankments, reclaimed land, capital and maintenance dredging, aggregate removal, dumping at sea and heavily modified waters within the designated shellfish area. |
| Land-based Pressures Maps | | |
| Point Source Pressures | | |
| MAP 18 | Municipal waste water systems | Urban waste water treatment plants and combined sewer overflows within the contributing catchment. These are symbolized based on their risk designations. |
| MAP 19 | Agricultural and aquacultural point source pressures | Pig units, and freshwater fish farms within the contributing catchment. |
| MAP 20 | Industrial point source pressures | Industrial IPPCs, Section 4s, water treatment plants, abstractions, mines, quarries, landfills and contaminated sites within the contributing catchment. These are symbolized based on their risk designations. |
| Diffuse Source Pressures | | |
| MAP 21 | On-site waste water systems | On-site waste water treatment plants within the contributing catchment. |
| MAP 22 | Dairy and drystock livestock units | Dairy and drystock livestock units per hectare of farmed land within each DED in the contributing catchment. |
| MAP 23 | Nitrogen fertiliser usage | Nitrogen fertiliser usage per hectare of farmed land within each DED in the contributing catchment. |
| MAP 24 | Phosphorus fertiliser usage | Phosphorus fertiliser usage per hectare of farmed land within each DED in the contributing catchment. |
| MAP 25 | Forestry types with acidification risk areas | Forest cover in the contributing catchment with areas identified as being at risk from acidification. |
| MAP 26 | Forestry types with eutrophication risk areas | Forest cover in the contributing catchment with areas identified as being at risk from eutrophication. |
| MAP 27 | Forestry types with sedimentation risk areas | Forest cover in the contributing catchment with areas identified as being at risk from sedimentation. |
| Morphology Pressures | | |

| Map No. | Map Title | Details |
|----------------|------------------------|---|
| MAP 28 | Structures | Barriers to migration, both natural and man-made in the contributing catchment. |
| MAP 29 | Physical modifications | Channelisation, heavily modified and artificial water bodies in the contributing catchment. |

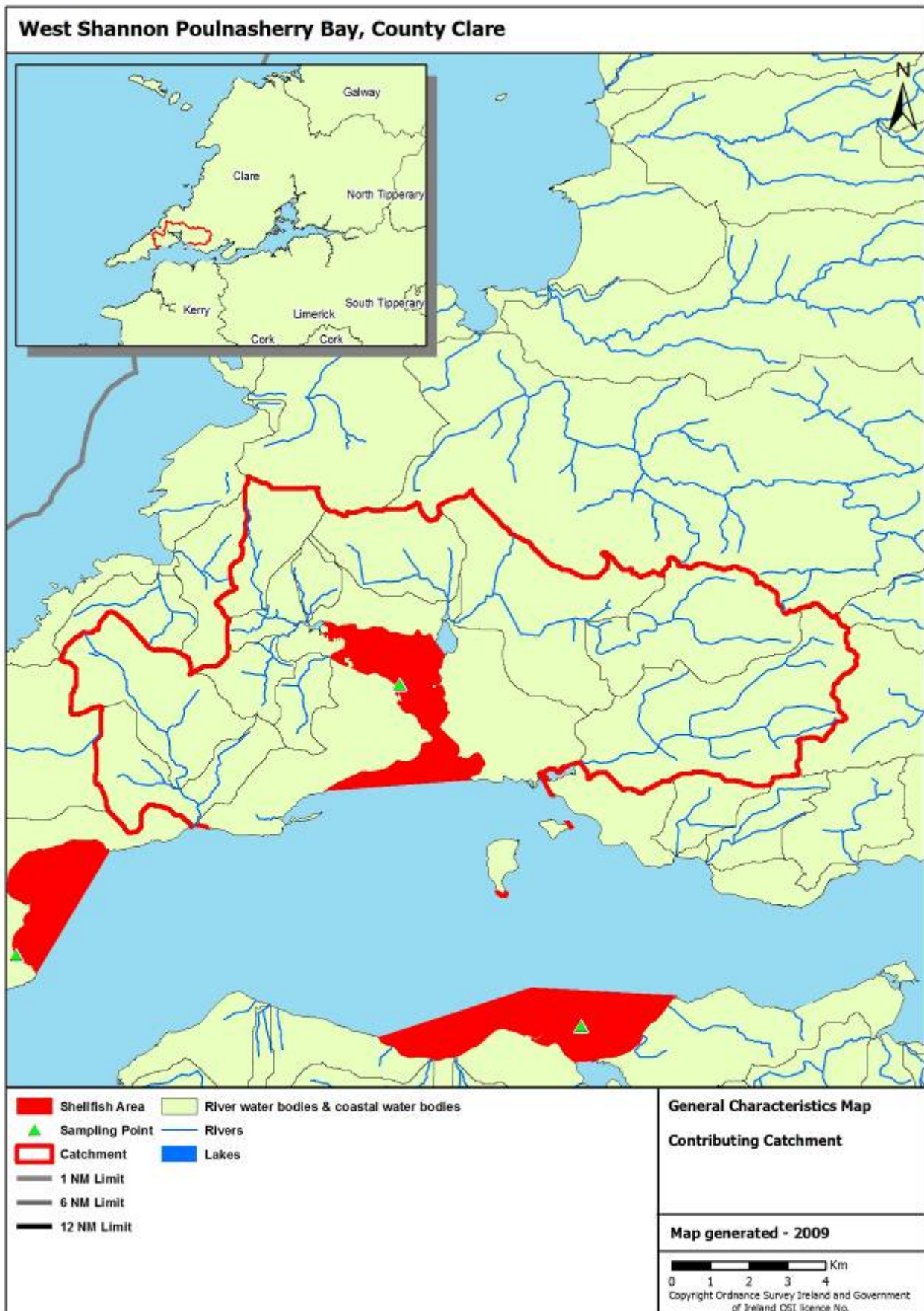
MAP 1 - Designated shellfish area



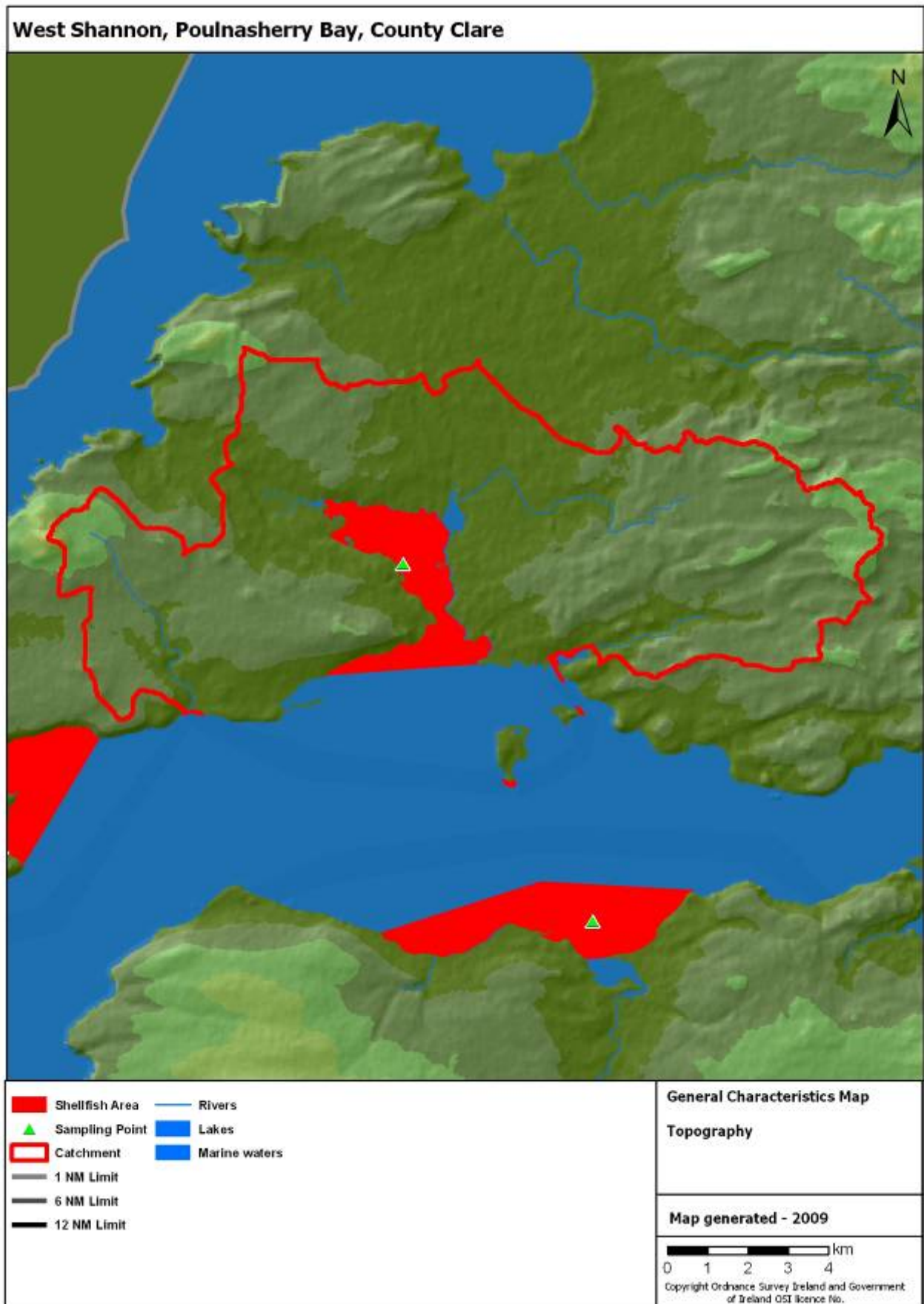
MAP 2 - Licensed shellfish areas



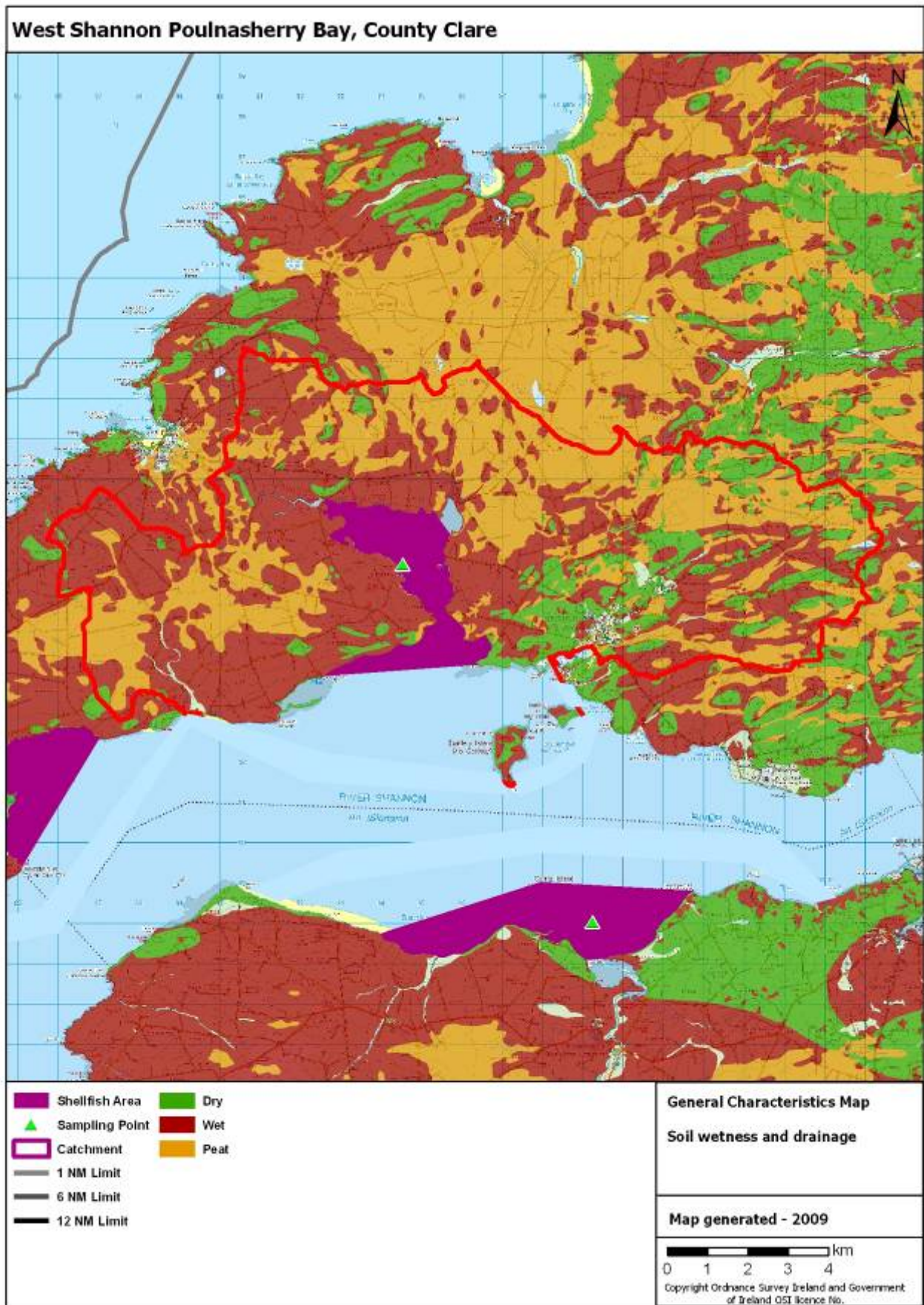
MAP 3 - Contributing catchment



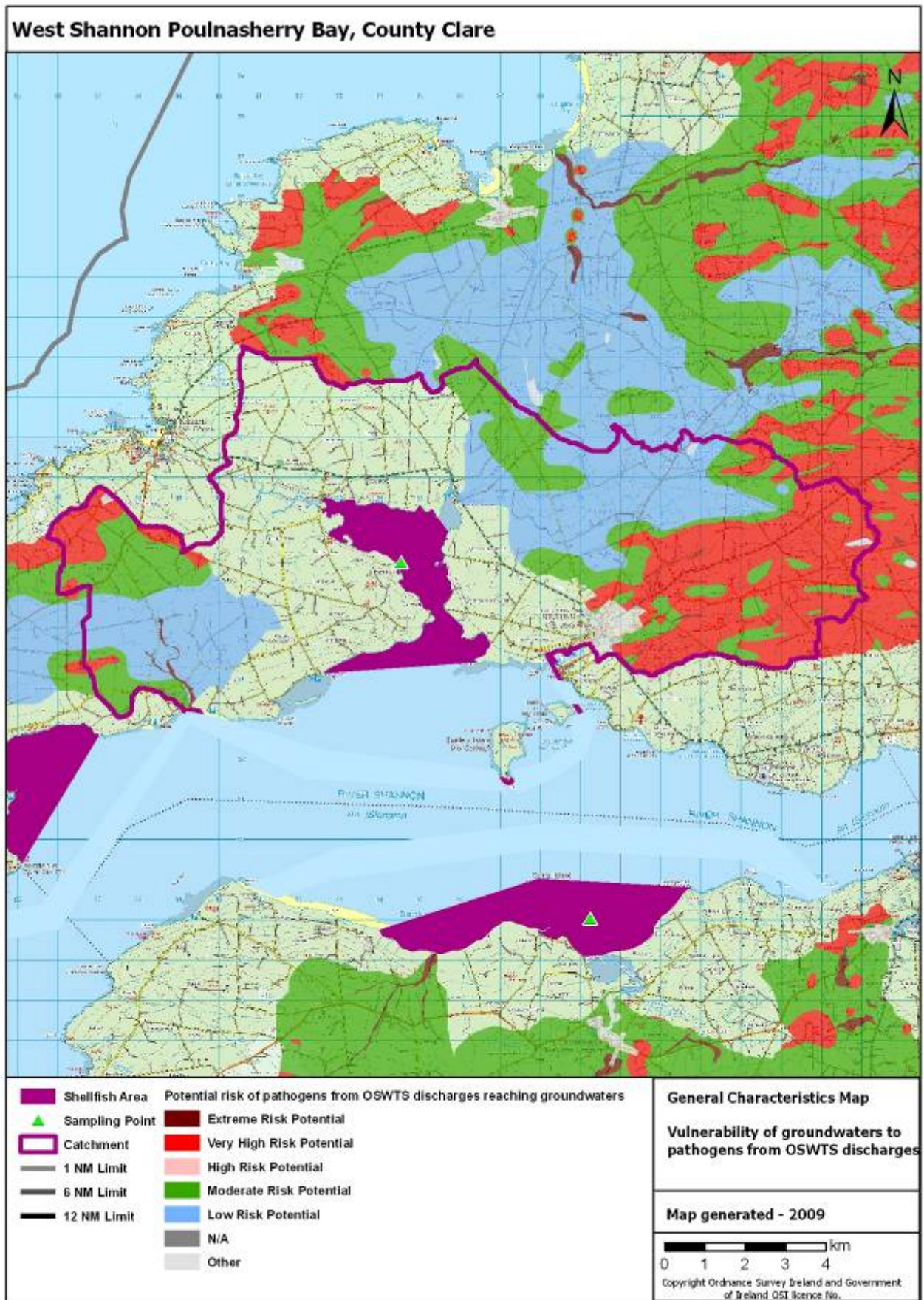
MAP 4 – Topography



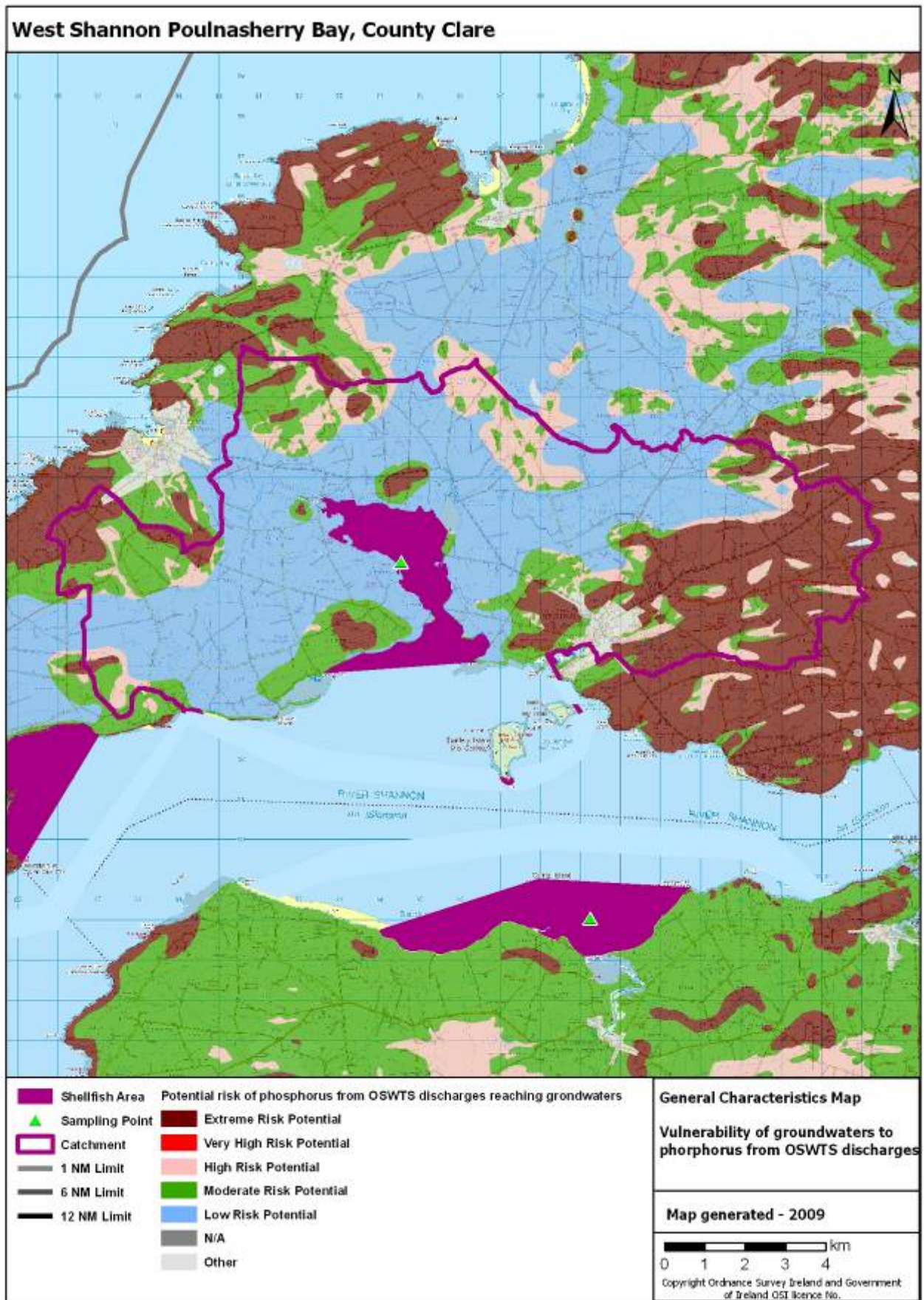
MAP 5 - Soil wetness



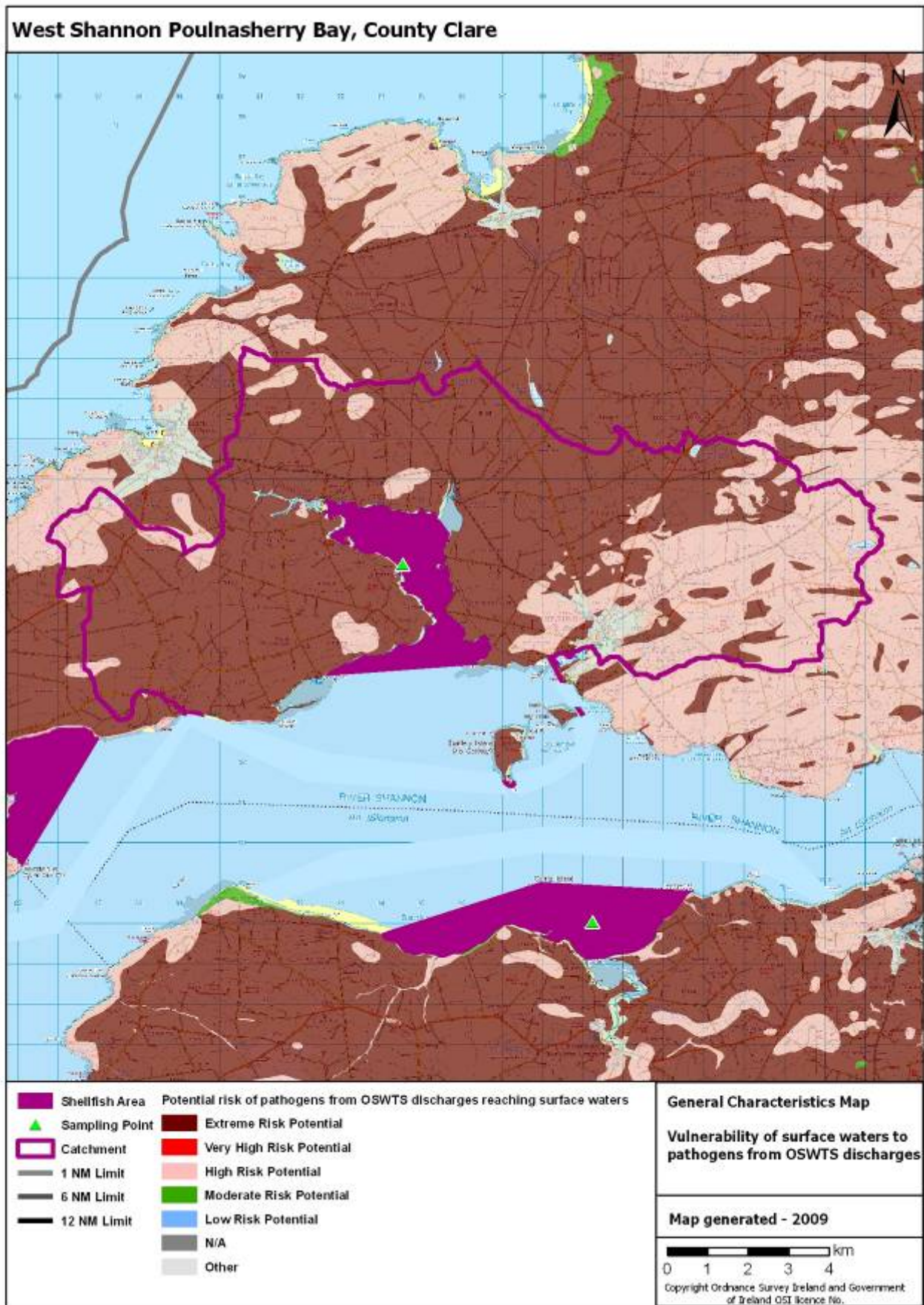
MAP 6 - Vulnerability of groundwater to pathogens from subsoil discharges



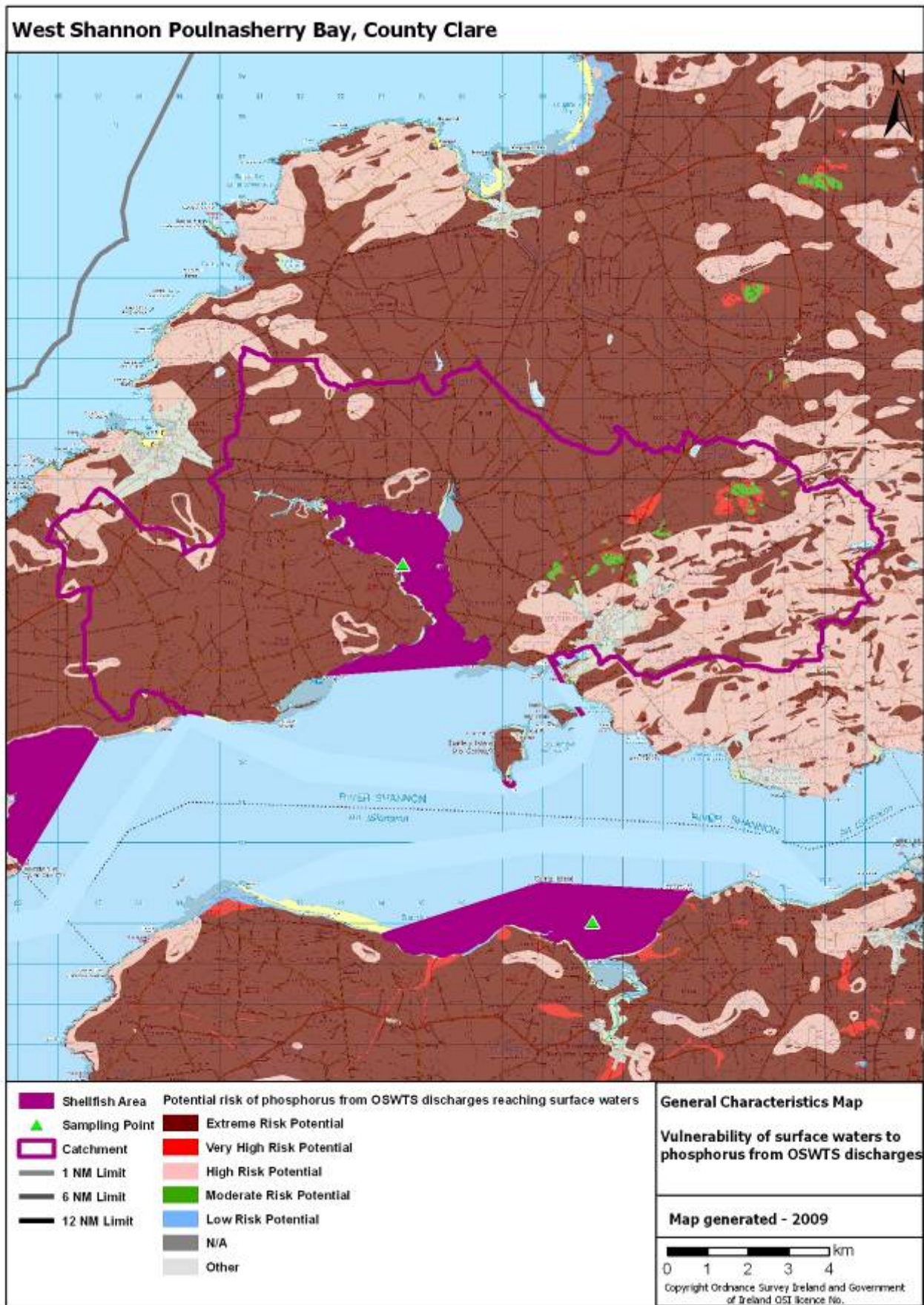
MAP 7 - Vulnerability of groundwater to phosphorus from subsoil discharges



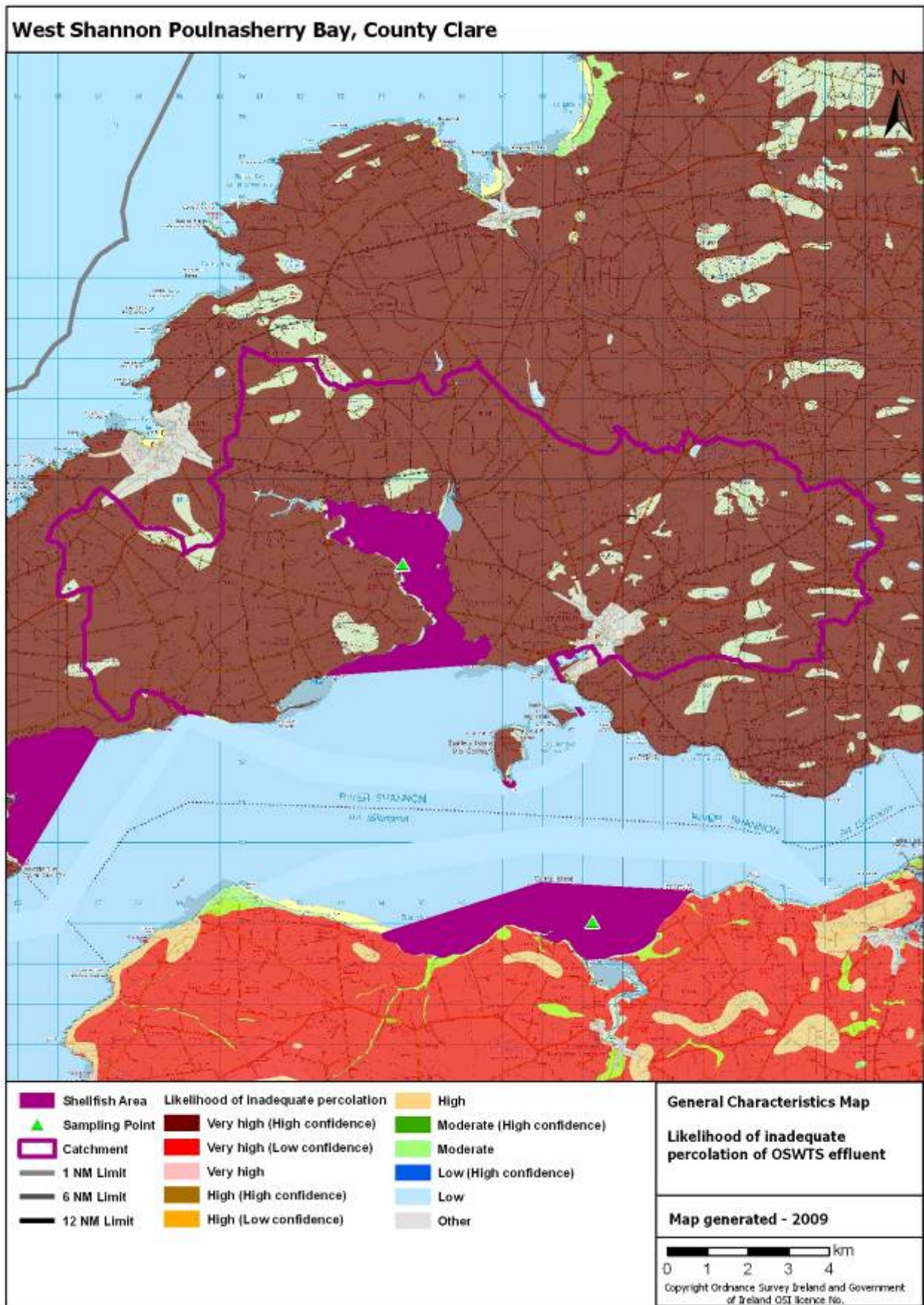
MAP 8 - Vulnerability of surface waters to pathogens from subsoil discharges



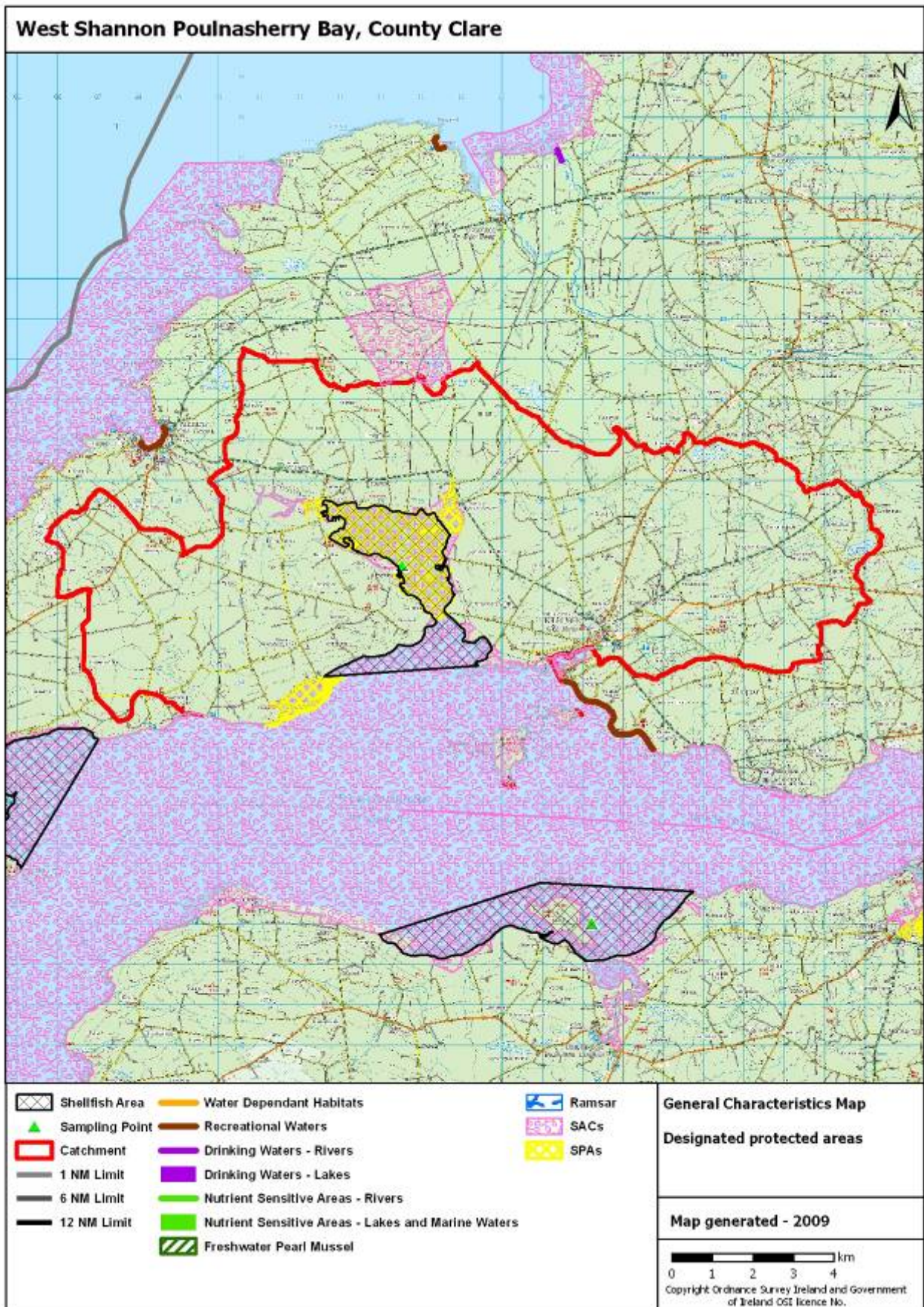
MAP 9 - Vulnerability of surface waters to phosphorus from subsoil discharges



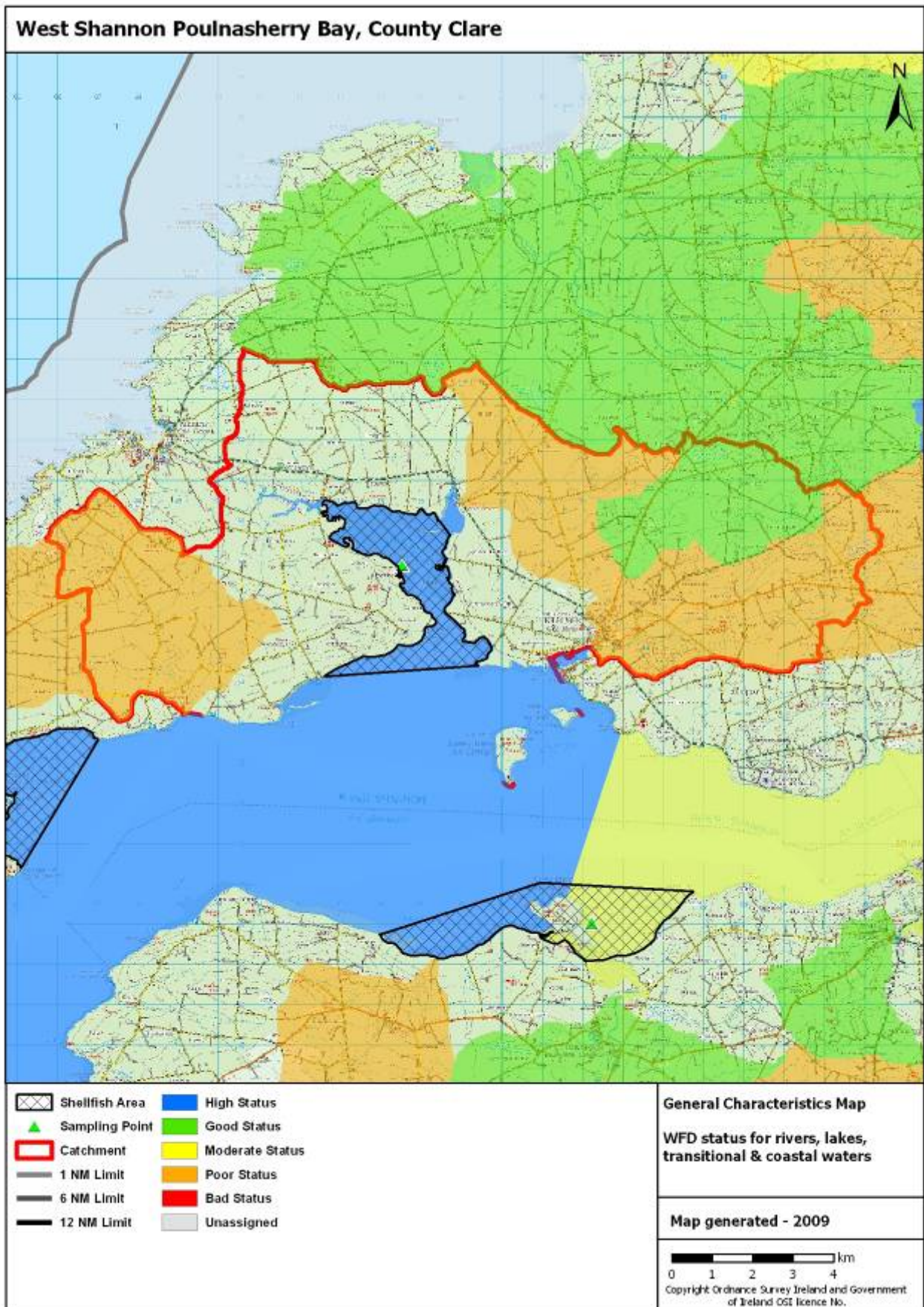
MAP 10 - Likelihood of inadequate percolation in sub-soils



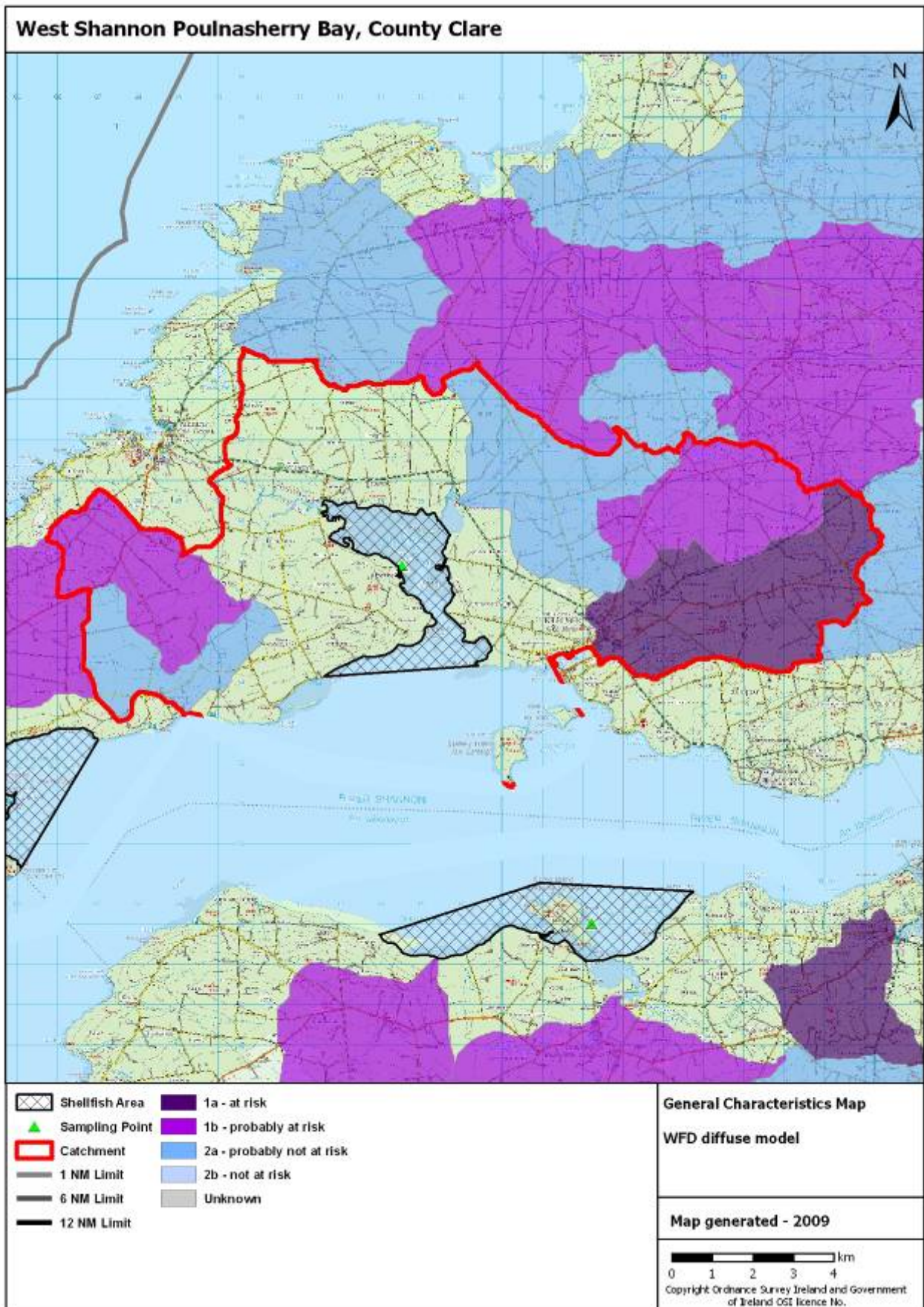
MAP 11 - Designated protected areas



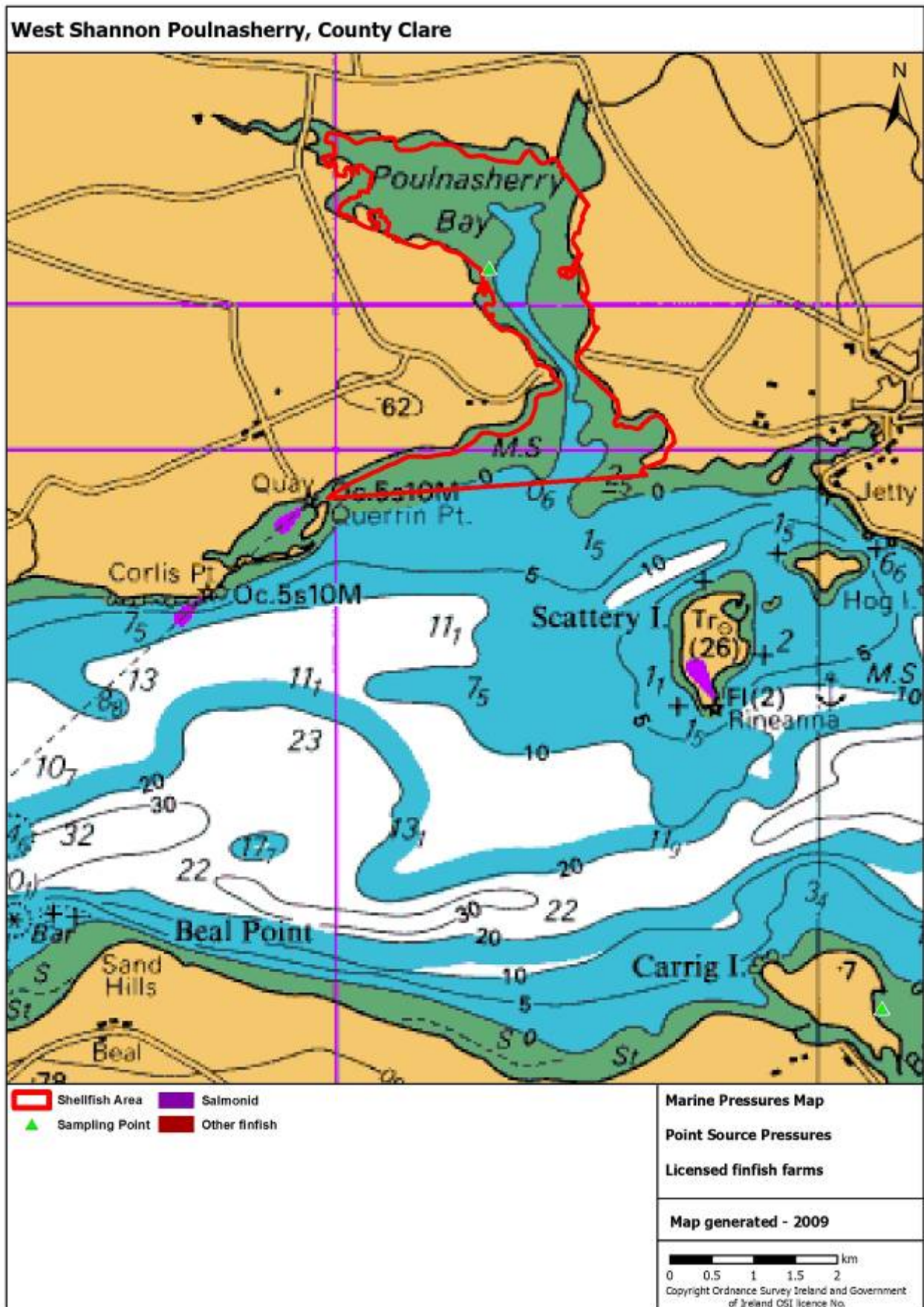
MAP 12 - WFD surface water status



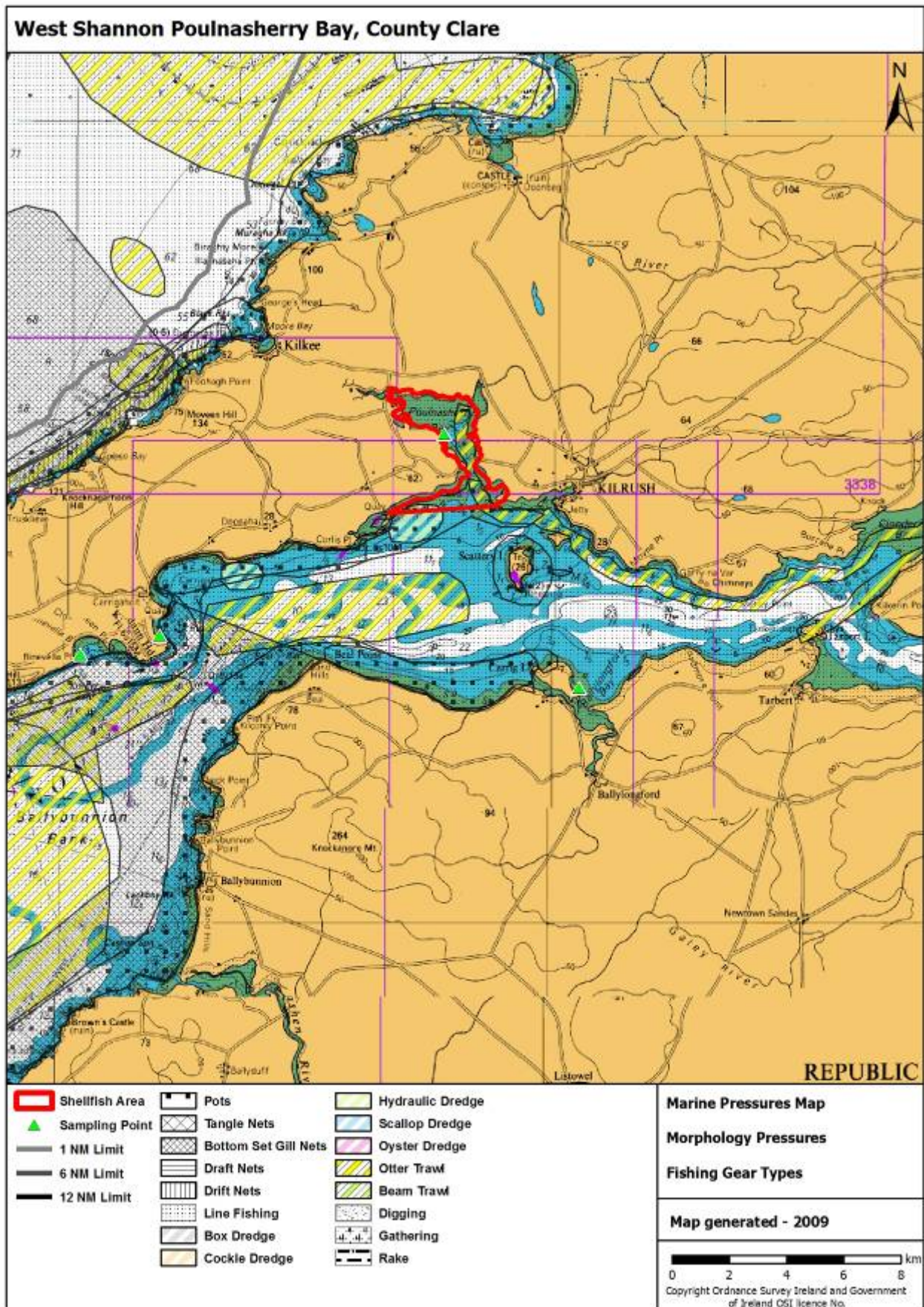
MAP 13 - Diffuse risk assessment



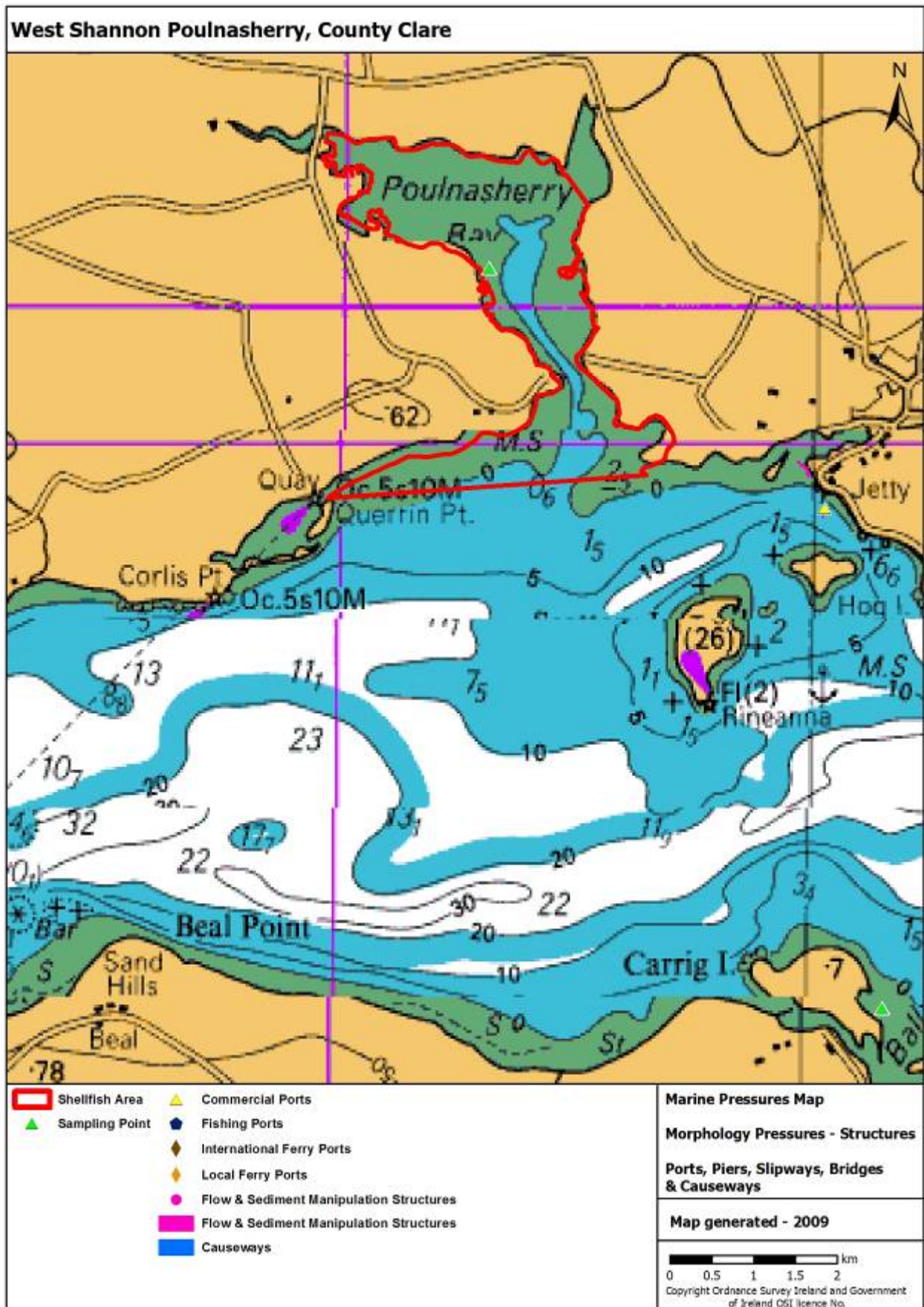
MAP 14 - Licensed finfish areas (None in the vicinity of this shellfish area)



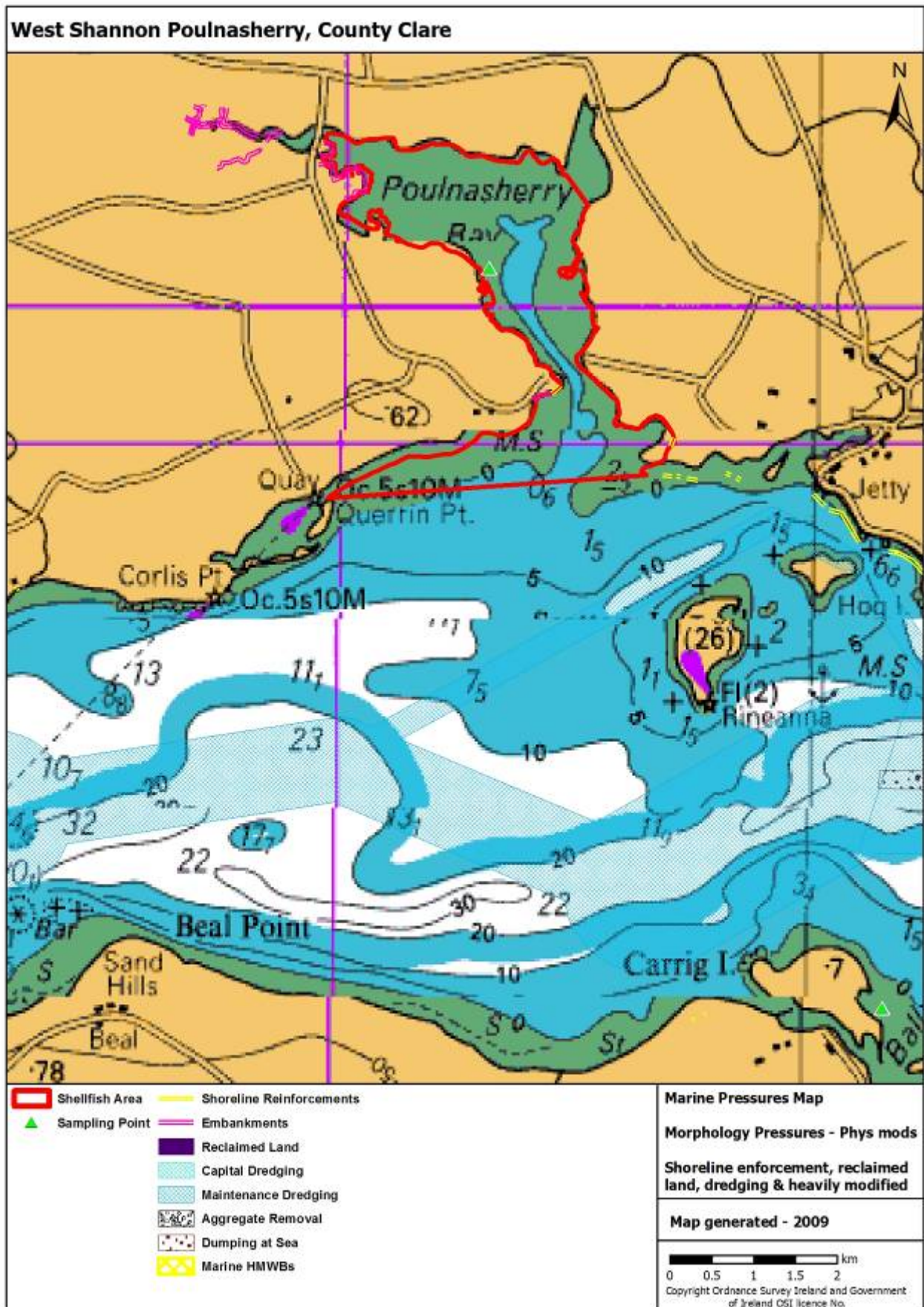
MAP 15 - Fishing gear activity



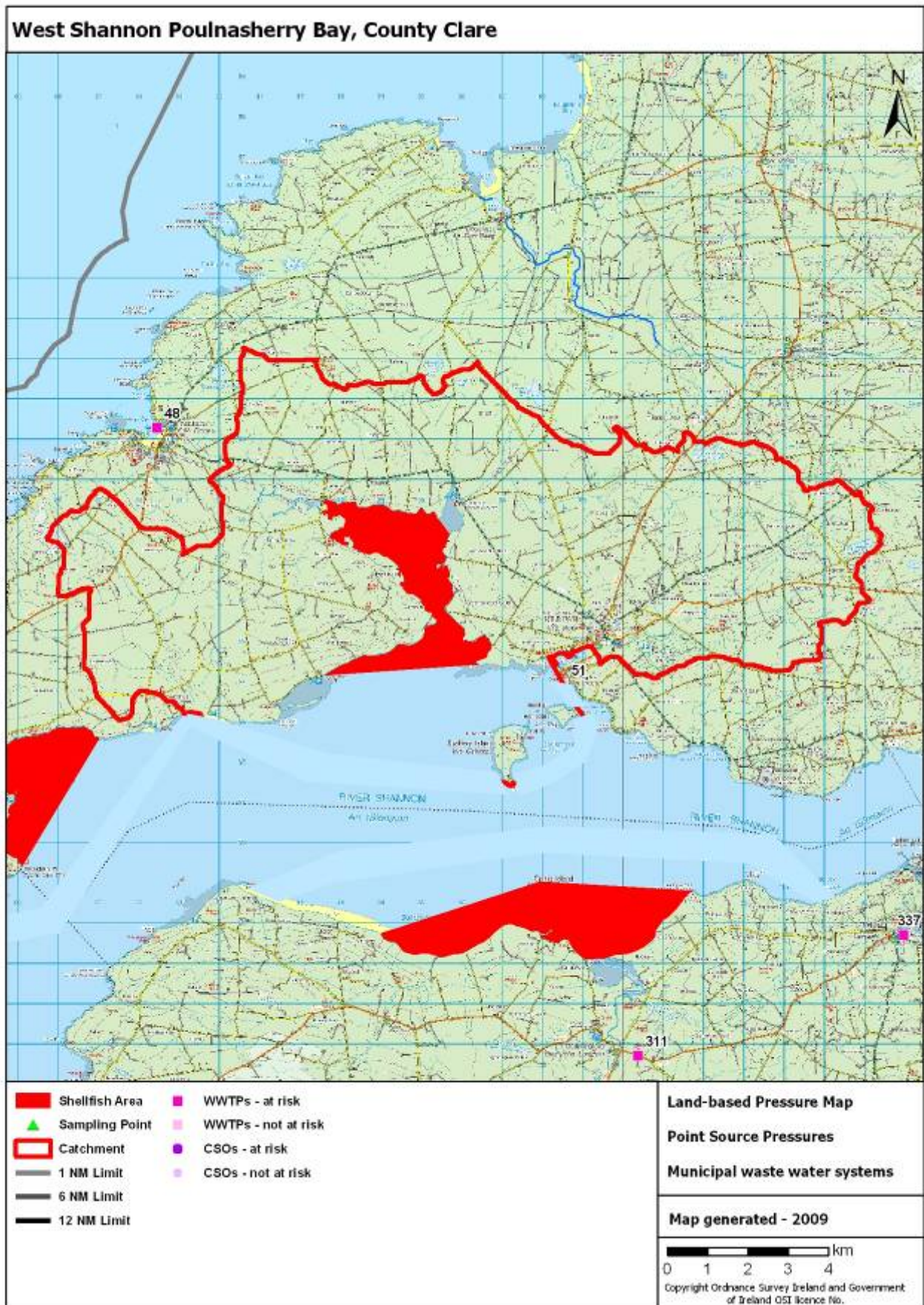
MAP 16 - Marine structures



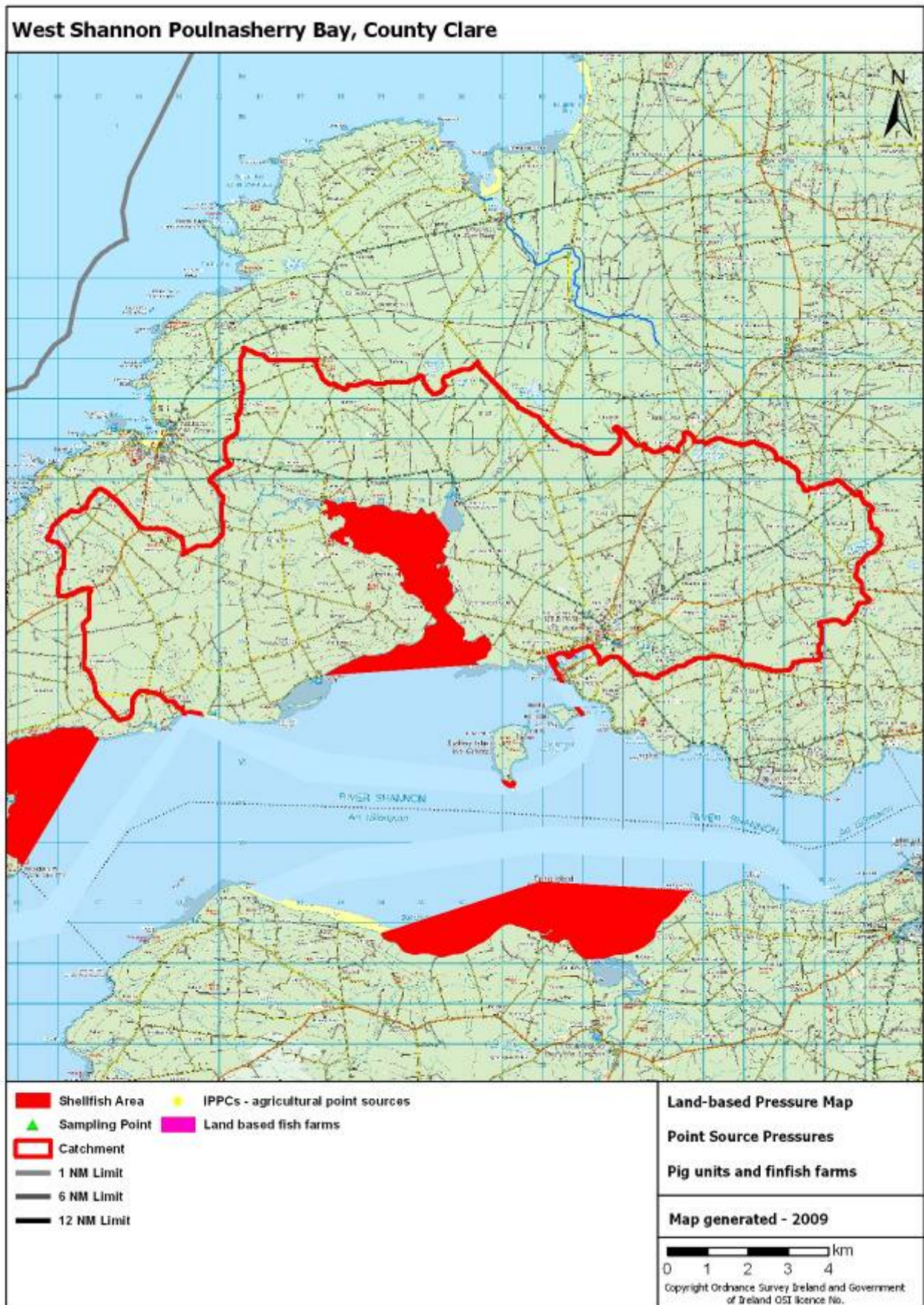
MAP 17 - Marine physical modifications



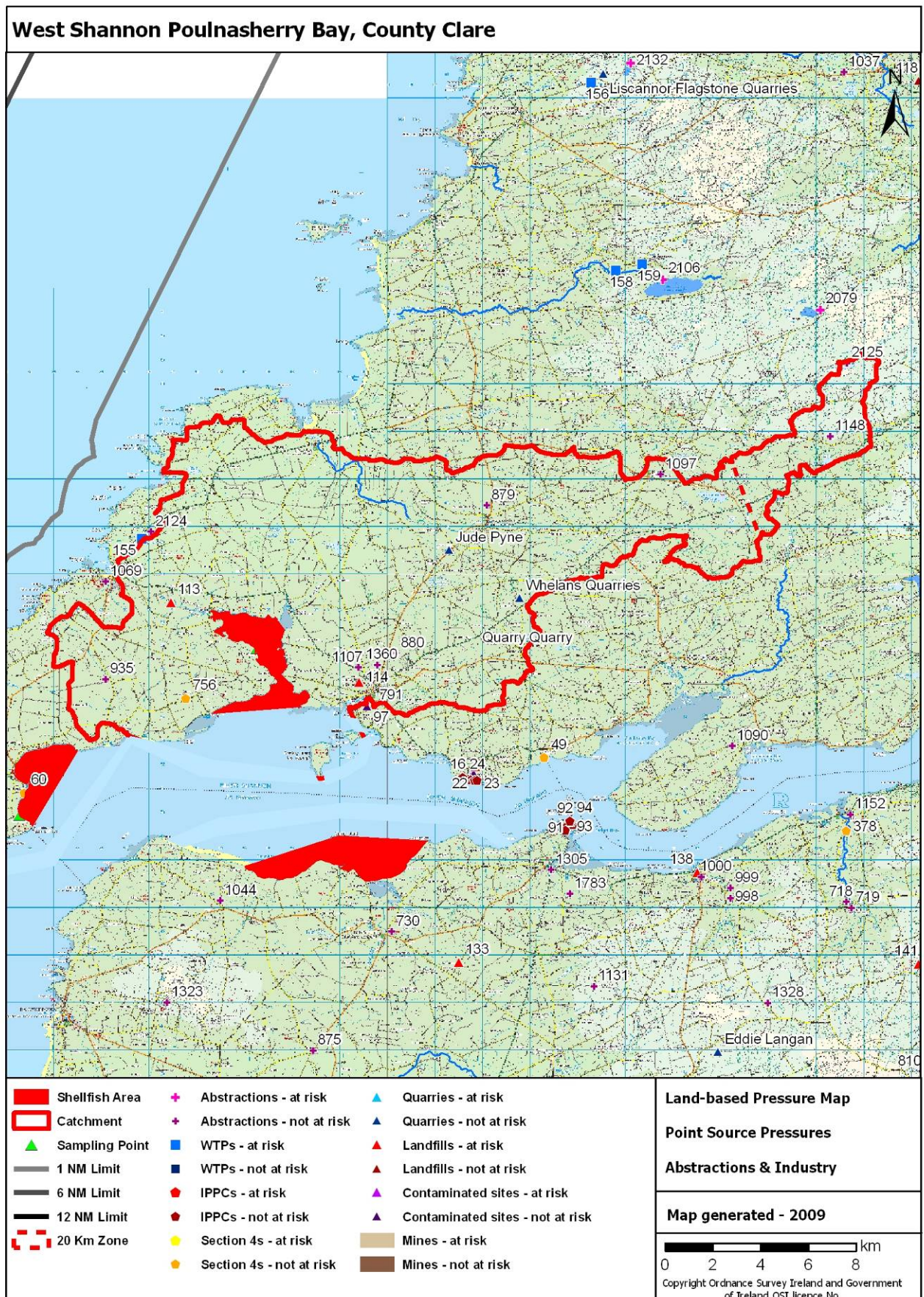
MAP 18 - Municipal waste water systems



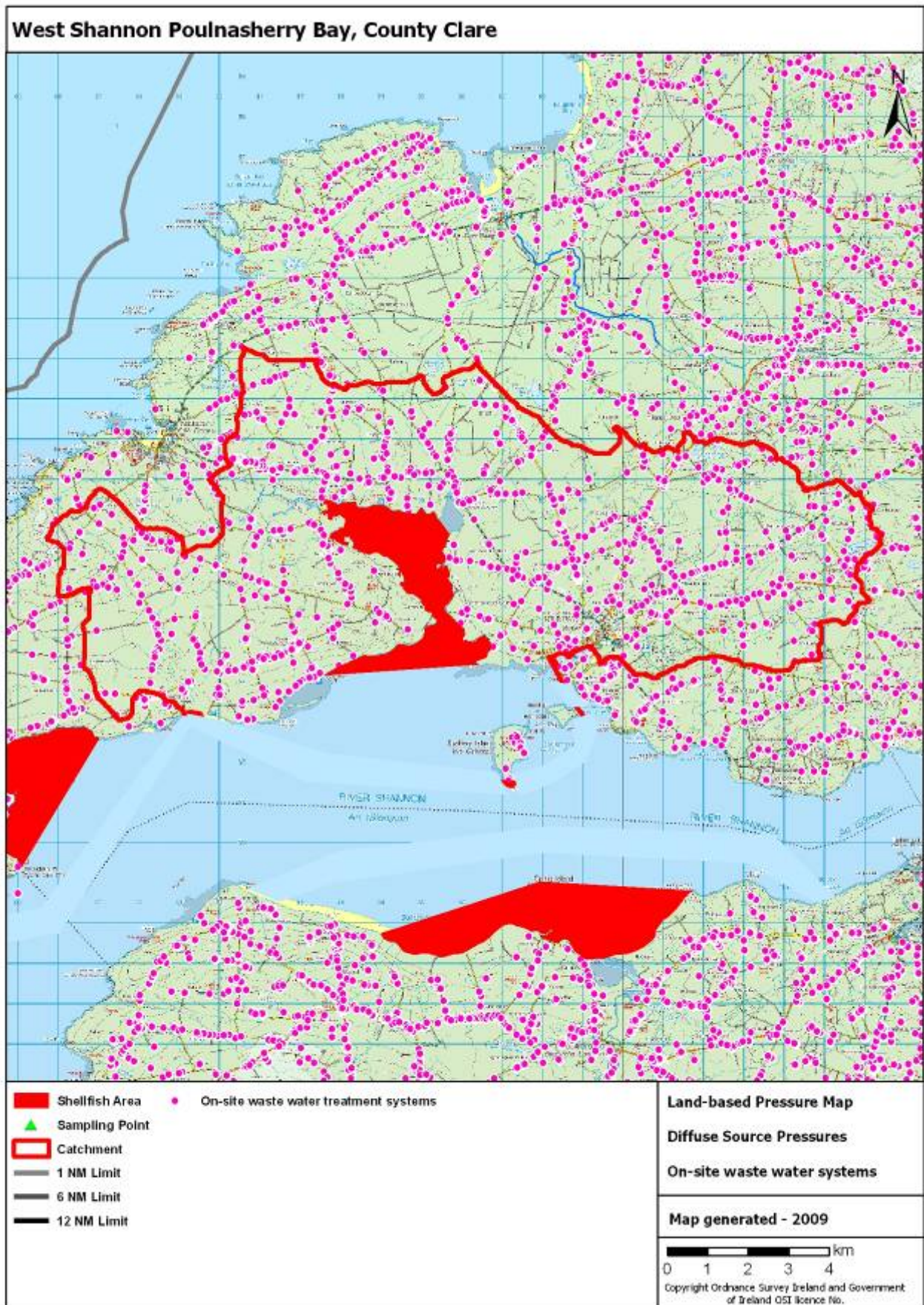
MAP 19 - Pig units and finfish farms (None in this catchment)



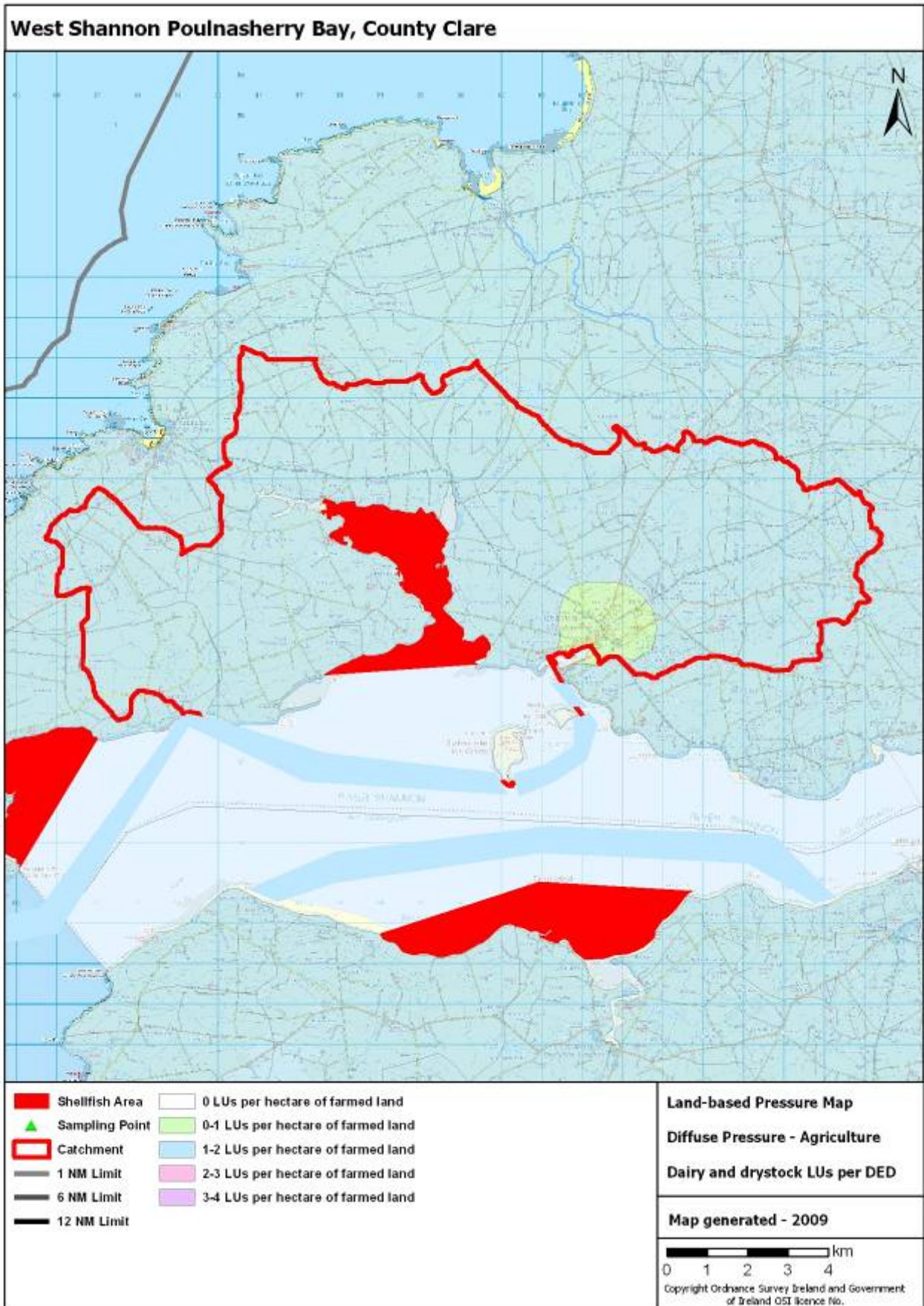
MAP 20 - Industrial point source pressures



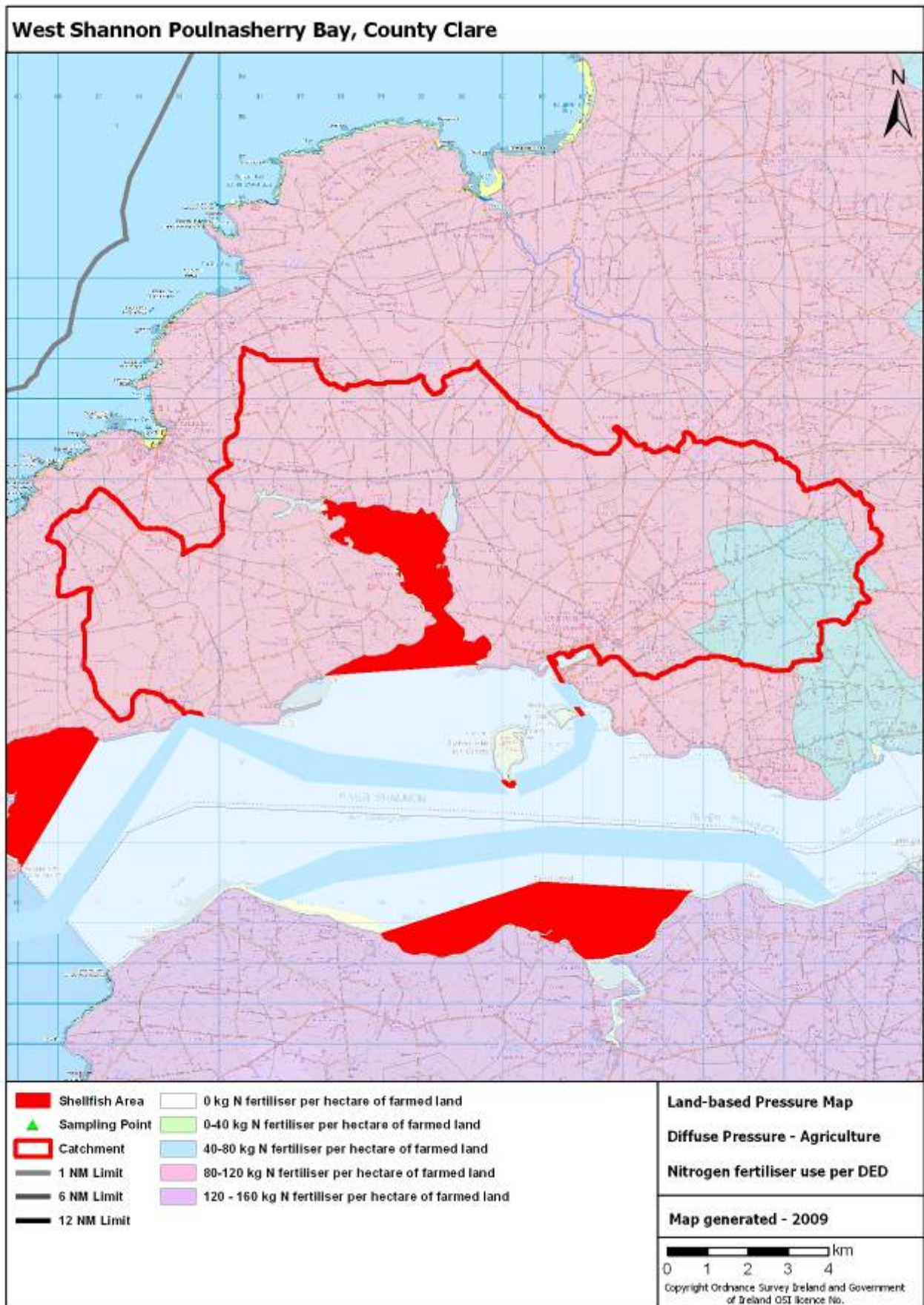
MAP 21 - On-site waste water systems



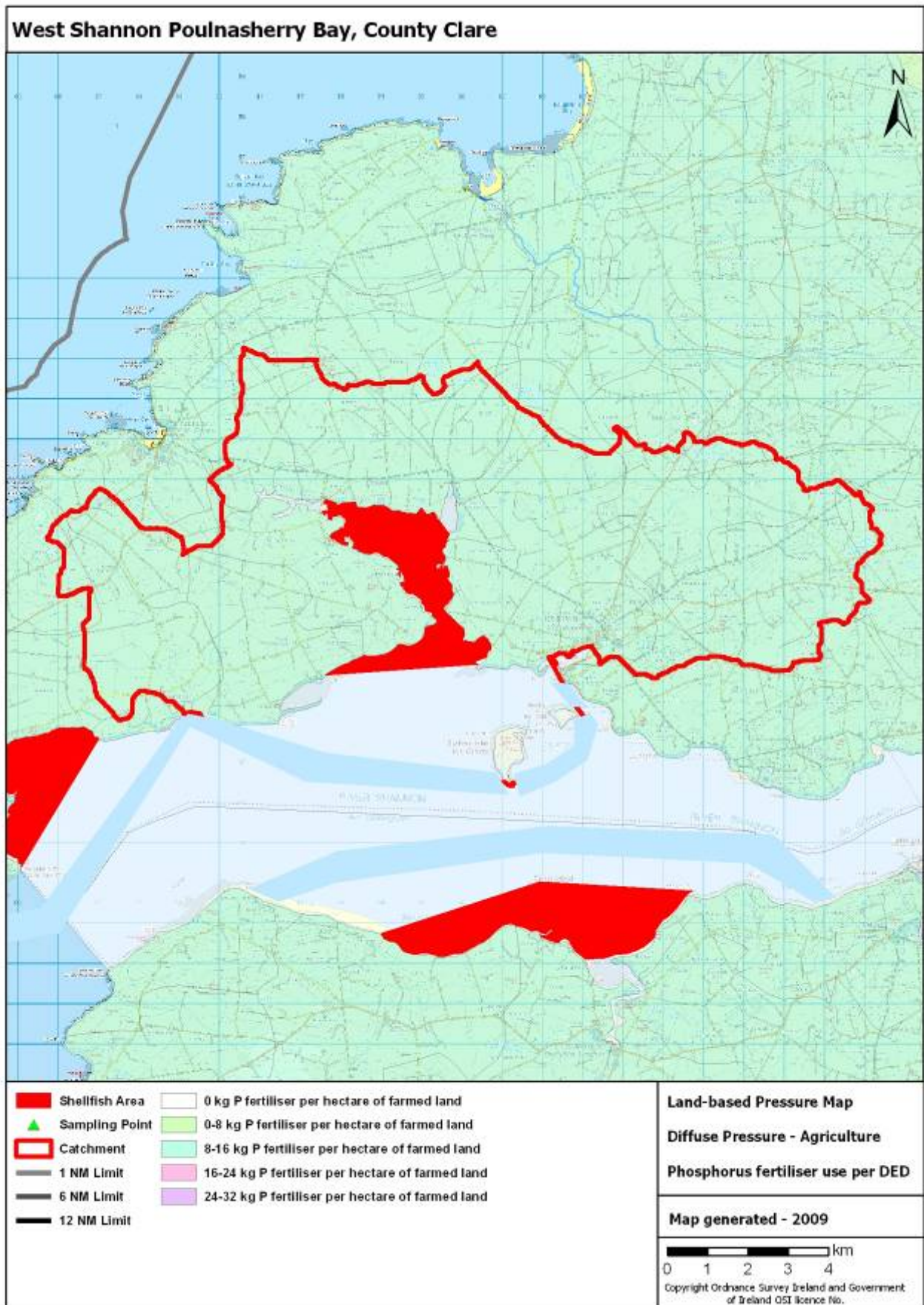
MAP 22 - Dairy and drystock livestock units



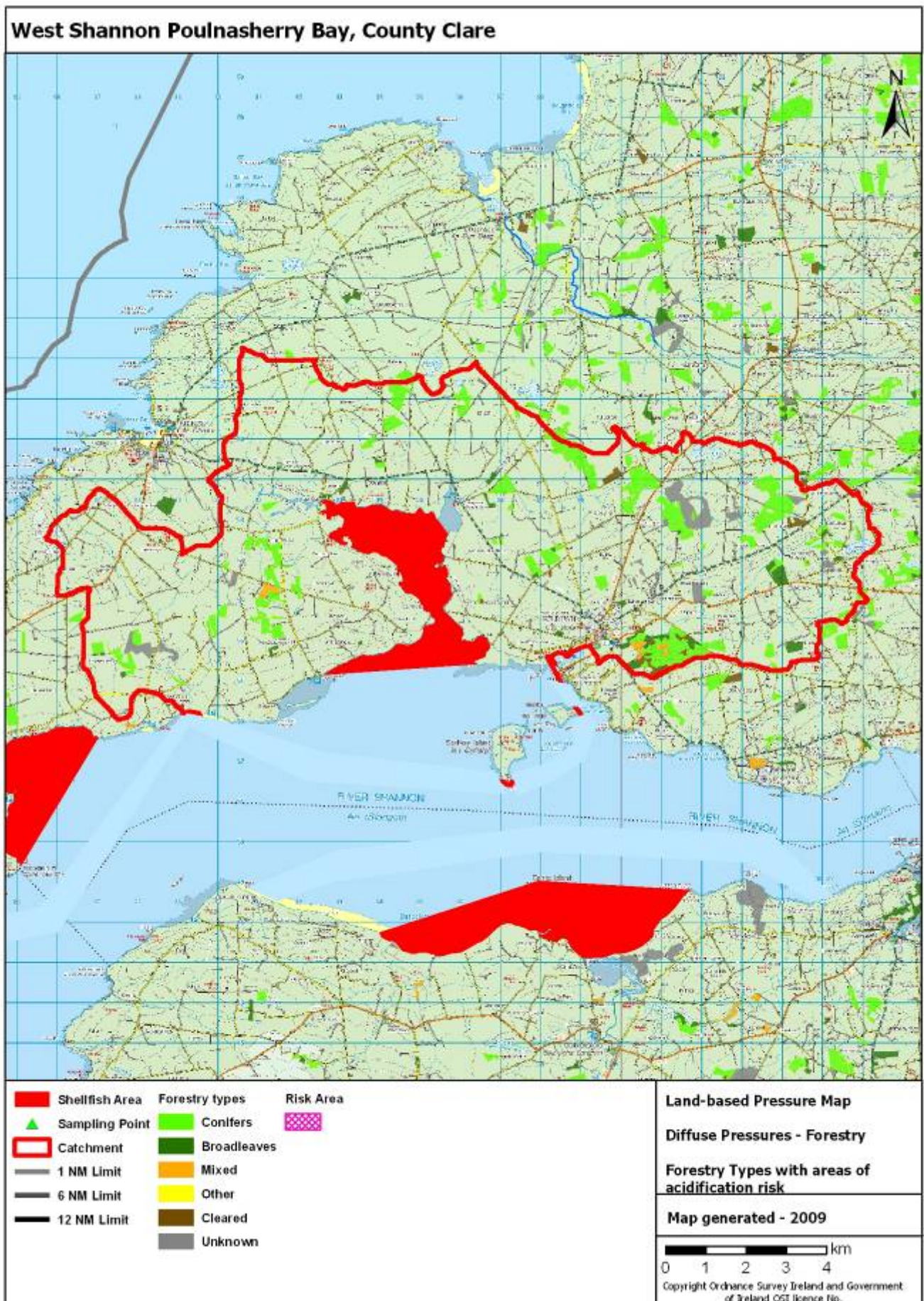
MAP 23 - Nitrogen fertiliser usage



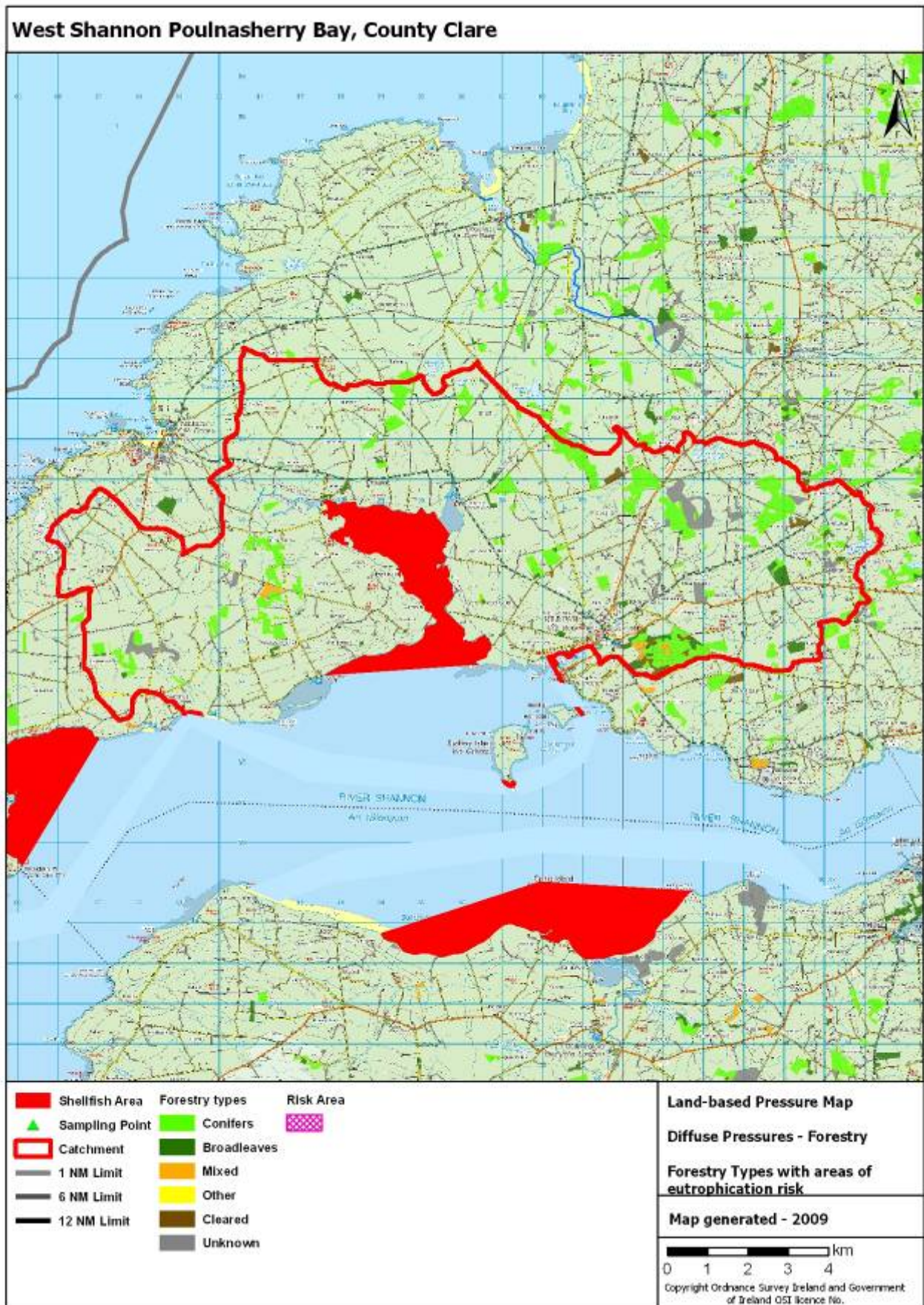
MAP 24 - Phosphorus fertiliser usage



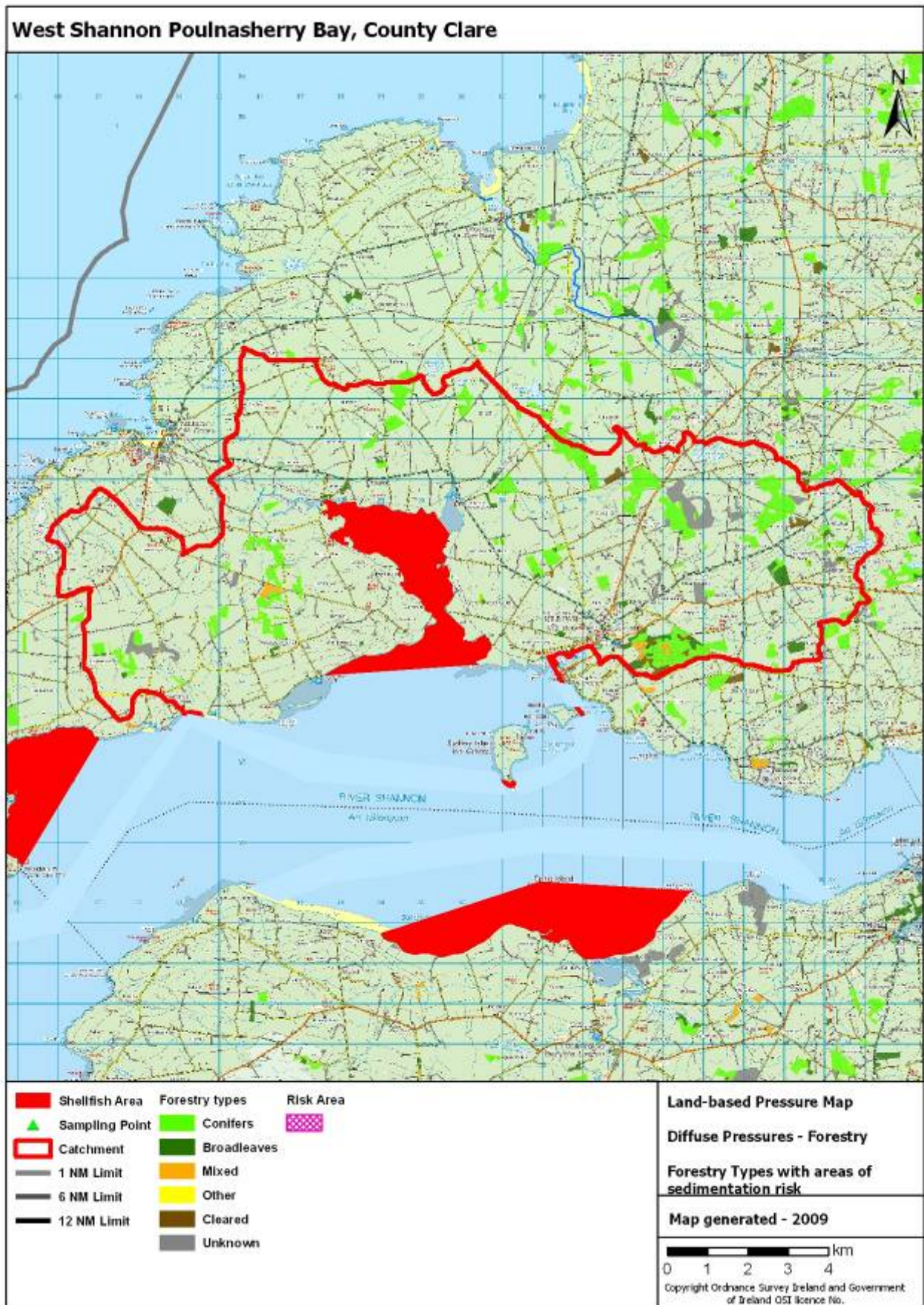
MAP 25 - Forestry types with acidification risk areas



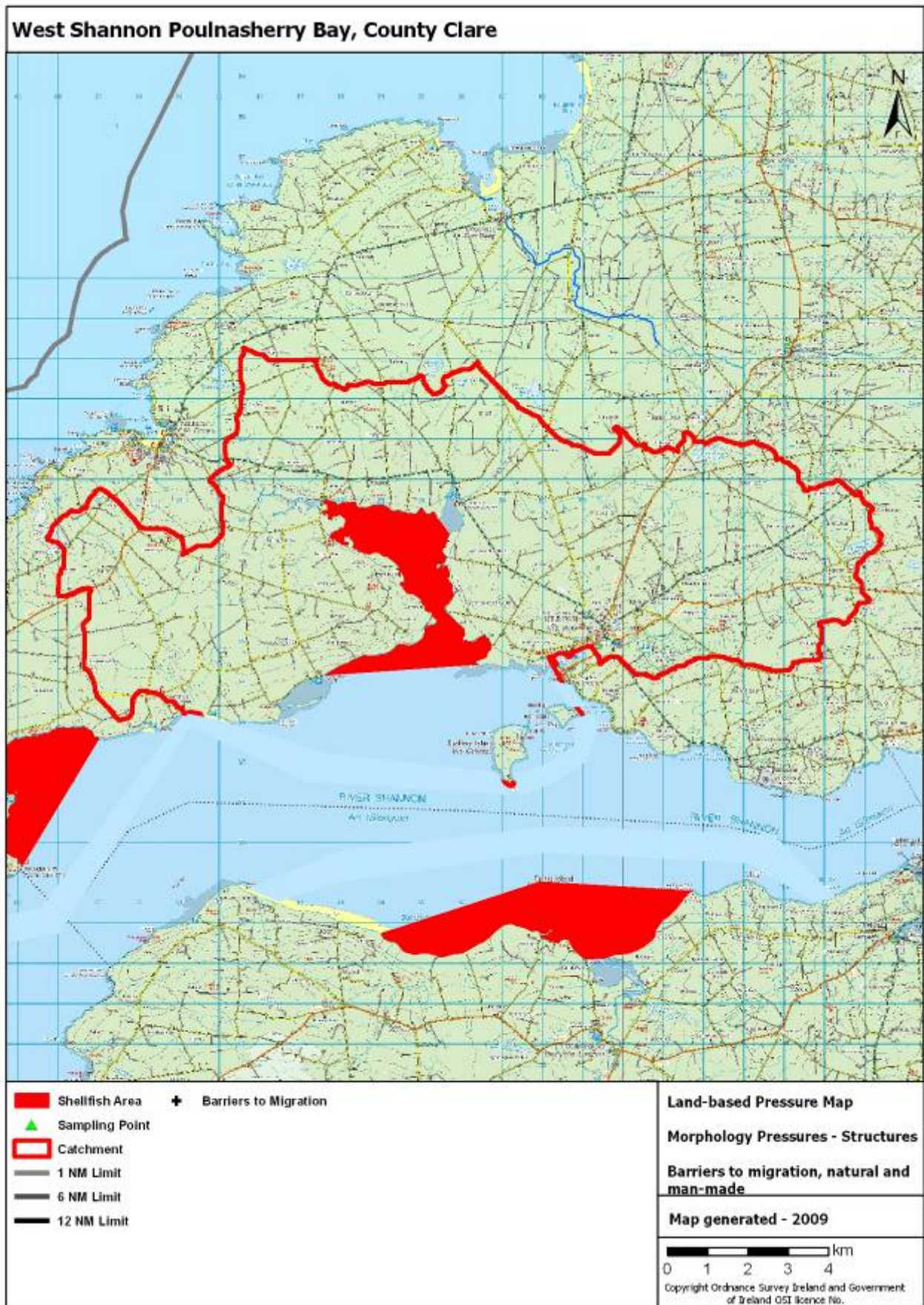
MAP 26 - Forestry types with eutrophication risk areas



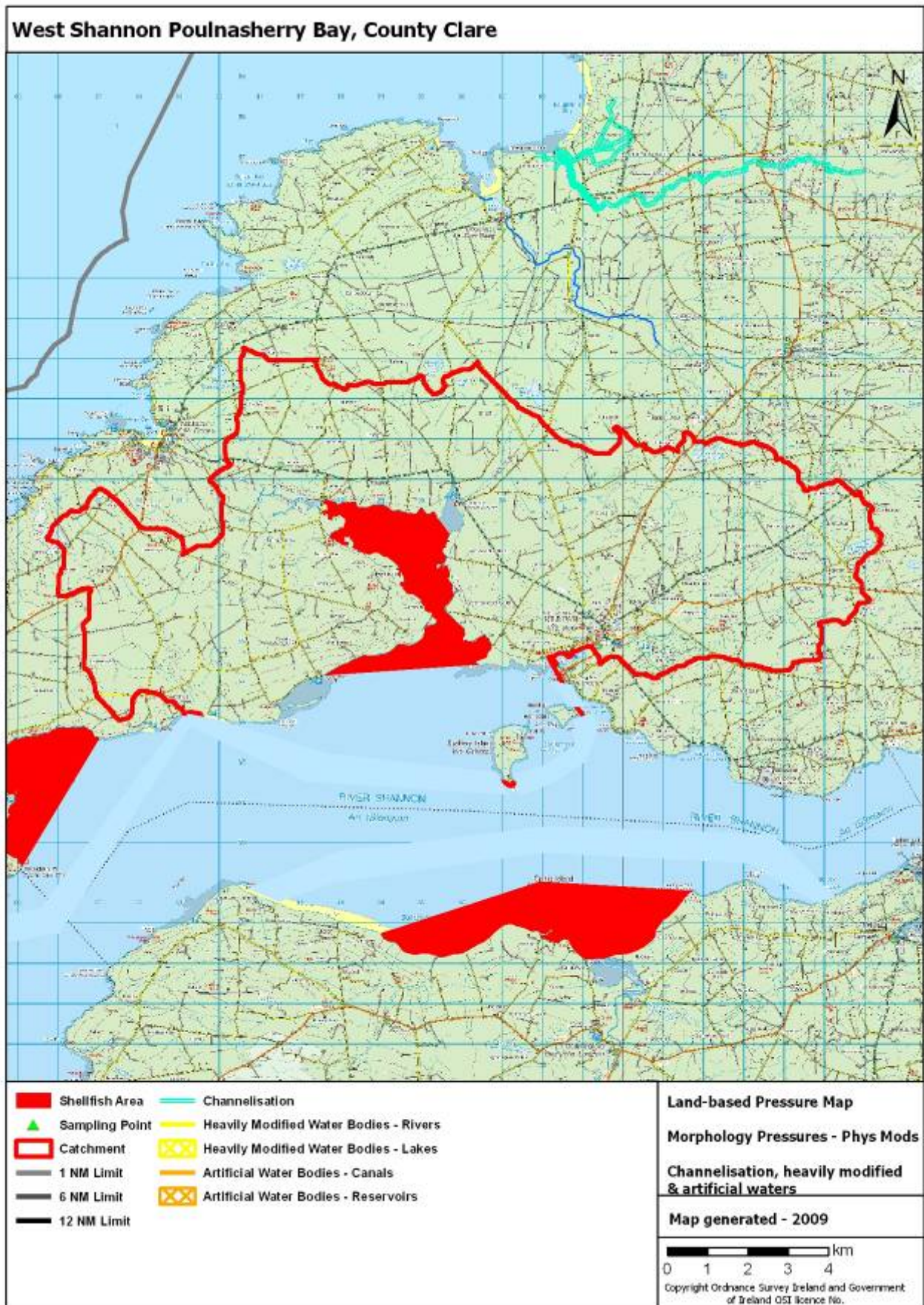
MAP 27 - Forestry types with sedimentation risk areas



MAP 28 - Freshwater structures (None in this catchment)



MAP 29 - Freshwater physical modifications (None in this catchment)



5.0 PRESSURES

This section of the characterisation report provides a tabular overview and inventory of the marine and land-based pressures in the vicinity of the designated shellfish area and within the contributing catchment up to a distance of 20 kilometres from the shellfish area. The pressure data has been derived from existing inventories. The pressures considered most likely to be related to any measured impacts on shellfish water quality parameters in this shellfish area have been estimated in order to focus management efforts towards the protection and improvement of the water quality in this shellfish area.

The available information considered when determining the likelihood of the pressures to cause impacts includes:

- pressure type

The pressure types, be it marine or land-based, point, diffuse or morphological, vary in terms of: their likelihood to impact on shellfish water quality; the water quality parameters they are likely to affect; and the severity of the impacts. The results of monitoring can therefore provide an indication of which pressure types are likely to be causing impacts.

- pressure magnitude

The magnitude of the pressures acting on a shellfish area can affect the overall potential impact. For marine pressures, the magnitude depends on the number and scale of the pressures but also on the exposure of the shellfish area to the pressures which in turn depends on how open or sheltered the shellfish area is and on water circulation. For land-based pressures, the magnitude depends on the number and scale of the pressures but also on the remoteness of the pressures from the shellfish areas which in turn depends on the distance of the pressures from the shellfish area, the topography of the catchment and the presence of lakes downstream of pressures which can act as pollution sinks.

- WFD risk designations

A series of risk assessments relating to the main pressures on waters were carried out during the WFD implementation process to identify pressures ‘at risk’ of impacting the surrounding water environment. These were originally carried out in 2004 and 2005 in accordance with Article V of the directive but many of them were subsequently updated in 2008 to feed into draft River Basin Management Plans. A lot of information about the pressures was collected to undertake these assessments and some of that information is summarised in this section where it is useful in screening which pressures are most likely to impact on shellfish water quality. In all cases, the most up-to-date risk assessment information available was used. Full details of the WFD risk assessments can be found at www.wfdireland.ie.

Whilst the risk designations under the WFD provide a useful screening tool for pressures, their relevance in terms of any water quality issues measured in Shellfish Waters has to be assessed in further detail to identify key pressures at a particular site.

Table 4 lists all of the pressures considered in the development of the characterisation report and indicates their presence or absence within the shellfish area, within the marine waters in the vicinity of the shellfish area or within the contributing catchment. Those pressures that are present are discussed later in this section.

TABLE 4 - Summary of pressures

| Pressure type | Pressure type | Pressures | Present | |
|---------------|---------------|------------------------------------|--|------------|
| Marine | Point | Marine finfish farms | No | |
| | | Morphology | Fishing gear activity | Yes |
| | | | Structures and associated activities | |
| | | | Ports | Yes |
| | | | Flow/Sediment manipulation structures | Yes |
| | | | Piled structures | No |
| | | | Causeways | No |
| | | | Physical modifications | |
| | | | Shoreline reinforcement | Yes |
| | | | Embankments | Yes |
| | | | Reclaimed Land | Yes |
| | | | Capital dredging | No |
| | | | Maintenance dredging | Yes |
| | | | Aggregate removal | No |
| | | | Disposal at sea | Yes |
| | | | Marine heavily modified waters | No |
| | Land-based | Point | Urban wastewater systems | |
| | | | Urban wastewater systems | Yes |
| | | | Combined sewer overflows | No |
| | | | Agricultural and aquacultural point sources | |
| | | | Pig units | No |
| | | | Freshwater finfish farms | No |
| | | | Industrial point sources | |
| | | | Abstractions | Yes |
| | | | Water treatment plants | No |
| | | | IPPCs | Yes |
| | | | Section 4s | Yes |
| | | | Quarries | Yes |
| | | | Landfills | Yes |
| | | Mines | No | |
| | | Contaminated lands | No | |
| | | Other | No | |
| | | Diffuse | On-site waste water treatment systems | Yes |
| | | | Agriculture | |
| | | | Livestock density | Yes |
| | | | Nitrogen fertiliser usage | Yes |
| | | Phosphorus fertiliser usage | Yes | |
| | | Forestry | Yes | |
| | Morphology | Structures | | |
| | | | Barriers to migration | No |
| | | | Physical Modifications | |
| | | | Channelisation | No |
| | | | Heavily modified waters | No |
| | | Artificial waters | No | |

5.1 Marine Pressures

Marine pressures are considered up to a distance of 5 kilometres from the shellfish area. Marine pressures situated further away or in adjacent waterbodies are also mentioned if they are considered significant. Marine pressure types include point source pressures (marine finfish farms) and morphological pressures including fishing gear activity, structures (ports, bridges, piers, slipways etc) and physical modifications (shoreline reinforcement, embankments, dredging etc). The potential impacts associated with these pressures are as follows:

- Point source pressures

Marine finfish farms can be associated with increased nutrient levels in waters, arising from fish excretion and excess feed input.

- Morphological pressures

Fishing activity can be associated with increased suspended sediment levels arising from disturbance of the seabed. The potential severity of the impacts varies depending on the type of fishing gear used and the extent, frequency and duration of the activity. The impact of boats is dealt with in association with marine structures below.

Structures (such as ports, harbours, bridges, slipways and piers) alter natural processes such as flow and silt movement and can therefore affect levels of suspended sediment in marine waters. The activities associated with these structures, for example shipping and boating, are associated with effects on the levels of general physico-chemical parameters, faecal coliforms, metals and chemicals.

Physical modifications (such as shoreline reinforcement, embankments and dredging) can alter natural processes such as flow and silt movement and can therefore affect levels of suspended sediment. However, once these modifications are established or the activities have ceased, the surrounding environment can acclimatise and impacts do not necessarily continue.

The following tables summarise the nature and extent of marine pressures up to a distance of 5 kilometres from the designated shellfish area. The likelihood for these pressures to impact on shellfish water quality parameters is discussed. The potential severity of the impacts of marine pressures is most closely associated with the activity type, magnitude and proximity and therefore the discussions in this section focus on these factors.

5.1.1 Point source pressures

There are no marine point source pressures in the vicinity of this designated shellfish area.

5.1.2 Morphology pressures

An assessment of the risk posed to marine waters from marine morphology pressures was carried out during the WFD implementation process. The results of this assessment show that the marine waters in and around this shellfish area are considered to be ‘not at risk’ from morphological pressures.

Fishing gear activity

TABLE 5 - Fishing gears

| Fishing gear types | Type | Present | Comment |
|----------------------|--------|---------|--|
| Pots | Static | Yes | Large area within and adjacent to the shellfish area |
| Tangle Nets | Static | No | North of shellfish area |
| Bottom Set Gill Nets | Static | No | NA |
| Draft Nets | Static | Yes | Very small area within the shellfish area |
| Drift Nets | Static | No | NA |
| Line Fishing | Static | Yes | Widespread throughout the area |
| Box Dredge | Mobile | No | NA |
| Cockle Dredge | Mobile | No | NA |
| Hydraulic Dredge | Mobile | Yes | Small area within and adjacent to the shellfish area |
| Scallop Dredge | Mobile | No | NA |
| Oyster Dredge | Mobile | No | NA |
| Otter Trawl | Mobile | Yes | Large area within and adjacent to the shellfish area |
| Beam Trawl | Mobile | No | NA |
| Digging | NA | No | NA |
| Gathering | NA | No | NA |
| Rake | NA | No | NA |

Table 5 provides a summary of the fishing gear activity occurring within 5 kilometres of the designated shellfish area. Map 15 illustrates these pressures. Boat movements are dealt with below in association with marine structures such as ports and piers.

Static fishing gear types generally would not be expected to impact on shellfish water quality. Mobile fishing gears however disturb the seabed and can therefore affect the levels of suspended sediments in marine waters with the severity of the impacts depending on the frequency, intensity and extent of the fishing activity.

Static fishing gear activity in the area includes widespread line fishing (lines set on the seabed with baited hooks at intervals) and the widespread use of pots (baited traps set on the seabed targeting crustaceans).

The use of mobile gear types includes the use of otter trawls within and adjacent to the shellfish area (nets towed along the seabed) and the limited use of draft nets (curtain of net hanging from the surface and towed to shore). Monitoring in the area does not indicate any water quality issues which are likely to arise from the use of fishing gears, the WFD morphology status of the water body within which the activity is occurring is ‘high’ (morphology is an element of WFD status) and the WFD assessment has deemed the area to be ‘not at risk’ from morphological pressures (Map 13). Therefore, it is unlikely that fishing activity is affecting shellfish water quality in this shellfish area.

Structures and associated activities

TABLE 6 - Marine morphology structures

| Marine morphology structures | Direct | 0-5km | Comment |
|--------------------------------|--------|-------|------------------------------|
| Ports | 0 | 1 | Kilrush commercial port |
| Flow and sediment manipulation | 1 | 12 | Slipways, piers, breakwaters |
| Piled structures | 0 | 0 | NA |
| Causeways | 0 | 0 | NA |

Table 6 provides a summary of the marine morphology structures located within 5 kilometres of the designated shellfish area. Map 16 illustrates these pressures. Flow and sediment manipulation structures include piers, breakwaters, groynes, flow deflectors and training walls. Piled structures include bridge and pier supports and wind turbines. Causeways include roads and railway lines. These structures affect flow and sediment movement and can therefore impact on levels of suspended sediments, though these impacts can settle down once the structures are well established in an area. The activities associated with marine structures, including shipping and boating, can affect a wide range of water quality parameters including general physico-chemical parameters such as suspended sediment, dissolved oxygen and nutrient levels. Faecal coliform levels can also be affected as well as the levels of harmful substances such as metals and pesticides. Boat movements can lead to erosion and sedimentation effects as well as pollution from fuels.

Kilrush commercial port is located approximately 2 kilometres to the east of the shellfish area. There is 1 slipway directly adjacent to the shellfish area and 12 additional marine structures within 5 kilometres of the shellfish area. Monitoring in the area does not indicate any water quality issues which are likely to be associated with the marine structures themselves or their associated activities (such as fishing and boating), the WFD morphology status of the water body in the area is ‘high’ and the WFD assessment has deemed the area to be ‘not at risk’ from morphological pressures. Therefore, it is unlikely that the marine structures themselves or the associated activities are affecting shellfish water quality in shellfish area.

Physical modifications

TABLE 7 - Physical modifications

| Physical modifications | Direct | 0-5 km | Comment |
|-------------------------|--------|--------|---------------------------------|
| Shoreline reinforcement | 2 | 12 | Sea walls, gabions, rock armour |
| Embankments | 2 | 17 | NA |
| Reclaimed land | 0 | 4 | Mouth of the Shannon |

| Physical modifications | Direct | 0-5 km | Comment |
|------------------------|--------|--------|----------------------|
| Capital dredging | 0 | 0 | NA |
| Maintenance dredging | 0 | 2 | Shipping channels |
| Aggregate removal | 0 | 0 | NA |
| Dumping at sea | 0 | 2 | Marine dumping areas |

Table 7 provides a summary of the physical modifications occurring within 5 kilometres of the designated shellfish area. Map 17 illustrates these pressures. These modifications can affect flow and sediment movement though these impacts can cease once the modifications are established.

There are 2 instances of shoreline reinforcement and 2 embankments directly adjacent to the shellfish area. A further 12 instances of shoreline reinforcement and 17 embankments occur within 5 kilometres of the shellfish area. There are 2 areas where maintenance dredging of shipping channels occurs within 5 kilometres of the shellfish area. There are also 2 marine dumping sites within 5 kilometres. Monitoring in the area does not indicate any water quality issues which are likely to arise from these modifications, the WFD morphology status of the water body within which the activity is occurring is 'high' and the WFD assessment has deemed the area to be 'not at risk' from morphological pressures (Map 13). Therefore, it is unlikely that these modifications are affecting shellfish water quality in this shellfish area.

5.2 Land-based Pressures

The contributing catchment is used to identify the land-based pressures that could potentially be impacting on shellfish water quality and therefore the size of the contributing catchment can be important in determining the magnitude of the pressures. Contributing catchment sizes vary considerably; however, pressures are only considered up to a distance of 20 kilometres from the shellfish area and are, where appropriate, divided into four zones: direct, 0 to 5 kilometres, 5 to 10 kilometres and 10 to 20 kilometres. Pressures within the catchment, but further than 20 kilometres from the shellfish area, are also included if they are considered significant. In addition significant land-based pressures acting in adjacent waterbodies which may have an impact due to tidal influences are also considered where relevant.

Land-based pressure types include point source pressures, diffuse source pressures and morphology pressures. The shellfish water quality parameters potentially impacted by these pressures are as follows:

- Point source pressures can affect the whole suite of shellfish water quality parameters. For example, waste water treatment plants, CSOs and agricultural point sources can impact on the levels of faecal coliforms, nutrients, bacteria and other harmful substances in receiving waters while IPPC licensed industries, mines, quarries and landfills can impact on the levels of polluting substances in receiving waters such as petroleum hydrocarbons, organohalogenated substances and metals. Abstractions are included under this heading and can impact on salinity levels, though not to an extent likely to lead to non-compliances with shellfish water salinity standards, as well as reducing the dilution available for polluting discharges.
- Diffuse source pressures affect many of the shellfish water quality parameters. Agricultural activity and on-site waste water treatment systems (OSWTS) can impact on faecal coliform levels as well as general physico-chemical parameters such as the levels of suspended sediments and dissolved oxygen. Forestry activity can impact on the pH of receiving waters as well as on the levels of suspended solids and nutrients and it is also associated with the use of pesticides which can contain organohalogenated substances.
- Land-based morphology pressures, and associated activities, are not generally associated with impacts on water quality in marine areas. Their impacts are usually associated with the loss of natural freshwater features and habitats and changes to the behaviour of freshwater systems including sediment movement. Channelisation activities however, if occurring close to shellfish areas, can impact on shellfish water quality, particularly the levels of suspended sediment.

The following tables summarise the nature and extent of land based pressures within the catchment up to a distance of 20 kilometres from the designated shellfish area. The likelihood for these pressures to impact on shellfish water quality parameters is discussed. All of the factors discussed at the beginning of this chapter can affect the likelihood for land-based pressures to impact on shellfish waters.

5.2.1 Point Source Pressures

Urban Wastewater Systems

Table 8 lists the urban waste water treatment plants in the catchment up to a distance of 20 kilometres from the shellfish area. Waste water discharges from waste water treatment plants can contain a wide range of potentially polluting components originating from households, industry and urban areas. These discharges can affect the levels of faecal coliforms, nutrients, dissolved oxygen, suspended sediment, organic wastes and harmful chemicals in receiving waters.

The WWTPs in the catchment were reviewed by experts in November 2009 with regard to Water Services Investment Programme and waste water licensing actions. The most significant plants were identified on the basis of proximity, plant performance, population equivalent and level of treatment.

TABLE 8 - Urban waste water treatment plants

| Name | Dist | Treatment level | WSIP 07-09 | Capacity P.E. |
|---------|------|-----------------|------------|---------------|
| Kilrush | 0-5 | No treatment | Yes | 2,800 |

NOTE: A minus figure in the percentage surplus columns means that the plant is working above its design capacity

There is 1 agglomeration in this catchment at Kilrush, 2.5 kilometres east of the shellfish area. There is no treatment provided currently but it is included in the current Water Services Investment Scheme (Kilkee and Kilrush Sewerage Schemes). A preliminary report has been submitted and final queries are under examination. A licence application was made by Clare County Council in December 2008 pursuant to the requirements of the Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations, 2007.

Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Industries

TABLE 8 - Integrated Pollution Prevention Control Licenses

| Name | Substances |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Saint Gobains | Organic solvents |
| Shannonside Builders | Wood treatment and protection |

Table 8 lists the IPPC licensed industries in the catchment up to a distance of 20 kilometres from the designated shellfish area. Discharges from IPPC licensed industries are diverse and can affect the levels of faecal coliforms, nutrients, suspended sediments, dissolved oxygen as well as a wide range of chemicals in receiving waters.

There are 2 IPPC licensed industries within the catchment. However, monitoring in this shellfish area does not indicate any water quality issues likely to be associated with these industries and therefore they are unlikely to be affecting shellfish water quality in this shellfish area.

Abstractions

TABLE 9 - Abstractions

| Name | Map Ref | Type | Distance | Status | Abs Rate m ³ day ⁻¹ | At Risk (Ratio) |
|------------------|---------|-------------|----------|--------|--|--------------------|
| Kilrush GWS | 880 | Groundwater | 0-5 | Poor | 14 | No |
| Doonaha Creamery | 935 | Groundwater | 0-5 | Poor | 34 | No |
| Leadmore Dairies | 1107 | Groundwater | 0-5 | nd | 4,538 | No |
| Kilrush Creamery | 1360 | Groundwater | 0-5 | Poor | 1,545 | No |

Note: 'nd' means 'no data' where abstractions are located in water bodies with no WFD status information

Table 9 lists the abstractions in the catchment up to a distance of 20 kilometres from the designated shellfish area. Map 20 illustrates these pressures and map references link the map and table. Information provided in the table in relation to abstractions includes:

- the type of abstraction (river, lake or groundwater)
- the distance of the abstraction from the designated shellfish area
- the WFD status of the water body within which the abstraction is located
- the abstraction rate, expressed in cubic metres per day
- the WFD risk designations associated with the abstractions and the reasons behind the designations

The WFD risk assessment in relation to abstractions was updated in 2008 to feed into the draft RBMPs. Abstractions are deemed to be 'at risk' if they account for a significant proportion (>10%) of the resource. For river abstractions, the net abstraction is expressed as a proportion of the Q95 flow (i.e. the flow that is exceeded 95% of the time). For lake abstractions, the net abstraction is expressed as a proportion of the Q50 inflow to the lake (i.e. the long term median inflow). For groundwater abstractions, the net abstraction is expressed as a proportion of recharge volume (i.e. long term average recharge across the groundwater bodies).

Generally it is very unlikely that abstractions would lead to non-compliances with the shellfish standards for salinity in shellfish areas. Abstractions that represent a large proportion of their corresponding resources can decrease available dilution capacity but this is also unlikely to affect shellfish areas.

There are 4 abstractions in the catchment. All of them are groundwater abstractions and none of them are 'at risk'. As these abstractions don't represent a significant proportion of their corresponding resources, they are unlikely to affect any aspect of shellfish water quality in this shellfish area.

Section 4 Licensed Industries

TABLE 10 - Section 4 Licenses

| Name | Map Ref | Distance | Status |
|-----------------------|---------|----------|--------|
| Querrin Holiday Homes | 756 | 10-15 | Poor |

Table 10 lists the Section 4 licensed industries in the catchment up to a distance of 20 kilometres from the designated shellfish area. Map 20 illustrates these pressures and map references link the map and table.

Discharges from Section 4 licensed industries are diverse and can affect the levels of faecal coliforms, nutrients, suspended sediments, dissolved oxygen as well as a wide range of chemicals in receiving waters.

There is 1 Section 4 licensed industry in the catchment. However, monitoring in the vicinity of the shellfish area does not indicate any water quality issues which are likely to be associated with it. Therefore, it is unlikely to be affecting shellfish water quality in this shellfish area.

Quarries, mines, landfills and contaminated lands

TABLE 11 - Quarries, mines, landfills and contaminated lands

| Name | Map Ref | Distance | Status | Risk | Notes |
|------------------|----------------|----------|--------|------|---|
| Lisdeen landfill | 113 | 0-5 | nd | Yes | Non-hazardous recycling centre and transfer station |
| Kilrush Landfill | 114 | 0-5 | nd | Yes | Landfill is unlined, closed historical landfill. |
| Whelans Quarry | Whelans Quarry | 10-15 | Poor | - | Quarry |
| Quarry | Quarry | 10-15 | Poor | - | Quarry |
| Quarry | Quarry | 10-15 | Poor | - | Quarry |

Note: 'nd' means 'no data' where operations are located in water bodies with no WFD status information

Table 11 lists the quarries, mines, landfills and contaminated lands in the catchment up to a distance of 20 kilometres from the designated shellfish area. Map 20 illustrates these pressures and map references link the map and table. Information provided in the table in relation to the plants includes:

- the distance of the industries from the designated shellfish area
- the WFD status of the water bodies within which the plants are located
- the WFD risk designations associated with the industries

Some of the WFD risk assessments in relation to these point sources were updated in 2008 to feed into the draft RBMPs but some of the assessments date back to the WFD characterisation process in 2004 and 2005. Expert opinion within Local Authorities was used to assign risk designations to quarries and landfills but monitoring data was used for mines and contaminated lands.

Mining and quarrying operations can impact on levels of suspended solids and metals in receiving waters whilst landfills and contaminated sites can be more diverse and impact on the levels of nutrients, suspended sediments and oxygen levels as well as metals and other chemicals.

There are 2 landfills within the catchment and expert judgement has deemed both of them to be 'at risk'. However, monitoring in the vicinity of the shellfish area does not indicate any water quality issues which are likely to be associated with these landfills or quarries. Therefore, they are unlikely to be affecting shellfish water quality in this shellfish area.

5.2.2 Diffuse Source Pressures

On-site waste water treatment systems

TABLE 12 - On-site waste water treatment systems

| Risk | Number | % of total |
|---|--------|------------|
| Total number | 2,158 | - |
| Number per km ² in the catchment | 8.8 | - |
| Number per km ² nationally | 1.4 | - |
| Number that are high risk to surface waters from pathogens | 2,136 | 98.98% |
| Number that are high risk to groundwaters from pathogens | 683 | 31.64% |
| Number that are high risk to surface waters from phosphorus | 2,021 | 93.65% |
| Number that are high risk to groundwaters from phosphorus | 793 | 36.74% |
| High likelihood of inadequate percolation of leachate | 1,954 | 90.54% |

Table 12 summarises the numbers of on-site waste water treatment systems (OSWWTS) within the catchment up to a distance of 20 kilometres from the designated shellfish area and outlines how many of them are located in areas of high risk to surface and groundwaters from pathogens and phosphorus and how many of them are located in areas where the likelihood of inadequate percolation of leachate is high. Map 21 illustrates the locations of the OSWWTSs while Maps 6 to 10 illustrate the risk to surface and groundwaters and the likelihood of inadequate percolation, all of which is based on soil, sub-soil and geological characteristics. Generally, systems located in areas where effluent cannot get away underground pose a risk to surface waters while systems located in areas where the effluent moves too quickly through the subsoil pose a risk to groundwaters. OSWWTS effluent can impact on the levels of faecal coliforms, suspended sediments, nutrients and dissolved oxygen in receiving waters. In addition, the use of household cleaning products can introduce a range of harmful chemicals to the water environment.

There are 2,158 systems in the contributing catchment and their density is much higher than the national average. The risk to surface waters from pathogens and phosphorus is very high throughout the catchment as is the likelihood of inadequate percolation. The majority of the systems are therefore located in hydrologically unsuitable conditions. Many of them are located in the coastal region of the catchment in the direct vicinity of the shellfish area. Other factors which affect the likelihood of these systems to impact surface and groundwaters are whether suitable types of systems are selected, whether they are installed correctly, whether they are properly maintained and whether they are situated close to ditches, drains, watercourses, wells or boreholes. Monitoring in this shellfish area does not indicate any water quality issues which are likely to be associated with these systems and therefore they are unlikely to be affecting shellfish water quality in this shellfish area.

Agriculture

TABLE 13 - Livestock units and chemical fertiliser usage

| Indicator | Catchment (per ha of farmed land) | National Average (per ha of farmed land) |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Livestock units | 1.25 LU | 1.20 LU |
| Nitrogen fertiliser usage | 86.19 kg | 92.09 kg |
| Phosphorus fertiliser usage | 9.3 kg | 9.74 |

Nitrates Directive limit = 170 kg N per hectare = approx. 2 LU per hectare
 Nitrates Directive derogation = 250 kg N per hectare = approx. 3 LU per hectare.

Table 13 provides an estimate of the average number of dairy and drystock livestock units and the average loadings of nitrogen and phosphorus chemical fertiliser per hectare of farmed land within the contributing catchment area. Maps 22, 23 and 24 illustrate this. The figures beneath the table express the nitrate limit (and Ireland's derogation) under the Nitrates Directive in terms of livestock densities. Discharges related to agriculture can affect the levels of faecal coliforms, suspended sediments, nutrients and dissolved oxygen in receiving waters. In addition, the use of pesticides and herbicides can introduce a range of harmful chemicals to the water environment.

Over 65% of the area of this catchment is farmed land. The estimates of livestock density and fertiliser usage are similar to the national averages. The EPA's diffuse model risk assessment, which investigates the relationship between catchment attributes (percentages of diffuse land cover including agriculture), water chemistry and ecological status, highlights risk areas from diffuse sources (Map 13). Also, the prevalence of peat and other wet soils in the catchment (Map 5) means there is a risk of runoff from agricultural land and. Monitoring in this shellfish area does not indicate any water quality issues which are likely to be associated with agriculture and therefore agriculture is unlikely to be affecting shellfish water quality in this shellfish area.

Forestry

TABLE 14 - Forestry types

| Type | Area | Percentage of area |
|-------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Conifers | 18.78 km ² | 7.7 % |
| Broadleaves | 1.98 km ² | 0.8 % |
| Mixed | 0.29 km ² | 0.1 % |
| Other | 0 km ² | 0 % |
| Cleared | 0.97 km ² | 0.4 % |
| Unknown | 3.06 km ² | 1.2 % |
| Total | 25.09 km ² | 10.2 % |
| Nationally | 6,795 km ² | 10.0 % |

Table 14 presents the area and percentage area of the catchment under the various types of forest cover. Maps 25, 26 and 27 illustrate this. Forestry activity can impact on the pH of receiving waters as well as on the levels of suspended solids and nutrients. It is also associated with the use of pesticides which can introduce harmful chemicals to the water environment.

There is just over 25 km² of forested land in this catchment and the percentage area under forest cover is close to the national average. Unlike agriculture, the location of forestry activity is known and the forestry activity does not occur in close proximity to the shellfish area. The EPA's diffuse model risk assessment, which investigates the relationship between catchment attributes (percentages of diffuse land cover including forestry), water chemistry and ecological status, highlights areas of risk from diffuse sources (Map 13). However, the more recent risk assessment, undertaken by the WFD Forest and Water study, does not highlight any areas of acidification, eutrophication

or sedimentation risk (Maps 25, 26 and 27). Monitoring in the vicinity of the shellfish area does not indicate any water quality issues that are likely to be related to forestry activity. Overall, forestry is unlikely to be affecting shellfish water quality in this shellfish area.

5.2.3 Morphology Pressures

There are no freshwater morphology pressures within the catchment

5.3 Summary of Key Pressures

Information from existing data sources has been used to identify all of the pressures acting on the shellfish area and to assess their likelihood to be affecting shellfish water quality in this shellfish area.

Monitoring in this shellfish area does not indicate any water quality issues.

This summary section highlights:

- **key pressures**

The key pressures are those identified as most likely to be affecting shellfish water quality. The final PRP will confirm and focus on these key pressures.

- **potential secondary pressures**

These pressures are identified as possibly affecting shellfish water quality. The final PRP will either confirm them as key pressures or eliminate them from further consideration.

5.3.1 Key Pressures

None of the pressures in this catchment are considered likely to be affecting shellfish water quality.

5.3.2 Potential Secondary Pressures

None of the pressures in this catchment are considered to be possibly affecting shellfish water quality.